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THE PERFECT WHOLE

An Essay on the Conduct and Meaning of Life

BY

HORATIO W. DRESSER

Author of "The Power of Silence"

"Beauty through my senses stole;
I yielded myself to the perfect whole"

EMERSON

BOSTON
GEO. H. ELLIS, 141 FRANKLIN STREET
1896

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PREFACE.

THE author claims no originality for this essay. Where so many have gleaned before, there is little opportunity for strict originality of thought; and he would indeed be short-sighted, who should not take full advantage of "the best that has been thought and said" in the past. Yet the emphasis of personal experience lends fresh value to the age-long problem of problems, and perhaps there is nothing so much needed in this age of doubt as a full and frank expression of individual conviction. Indeed, it is the highest privilege of our human brotherhood to convey to another some measure of that priceless wisdom which has taught one the secret of a peaceful and happy life.

Life is wonderfully simple. One efficient energy or Spirit permeates all that exists. A few universal habits or laws characterize this energy in all phases of its infinitely varied manifestation. To feel this Spirit as a living reality within, to understand these simple laws and reduce life to wise obedience to them without, this it is to possess such peace, such happiness, and such power of doing good as the world in general knows not of. The entire secret could be told in a few words; that is, so far as this great inner joy can be described by human speech. To cease the restless activity and pursuit which causes

the unhappiness of finite life, and recognize that which is eternally with us, is, in a word, the method whereby the great secret may be learned. But all this requires time. The intellect is not easily convinced of the supremacy and sufficiency of the Spirit. One must approach the heart of life by degrees, since otherwise one's development will not be harmonious. This book is accordingly designed to exercise this rare privilege by conveying in its unpretentious way the inmost essence of a wisely conducted and useful life. It approaches the subject from many points of view, in order to meet all classes of minds. The author has borne in mind many problems which are barely touched on here, since the aim has been to rid this treatise of as much extraneous material as possible, and to leave the more technical problems of philosophy for consideration at some future time. So far as he has laid down principles of conduct, the author has drawn largely upon personal experience; and he advocates no doctrine which he is himself unwilling to practise. Every practical suggestion offered has, in fact, borne the test of continued application. Indeed, the book errs — in so far as it fails in its purpose — by being largely an individual interpretation of that which by definition includes all finite thought. The reader should therefore make full allowance for the personal equation, and turn from this mere fragment of the great world-problem to its larger exemplification in human society. Only in this way can an individual interpretation of life hope to play its part in the development of sound universal philosophy.

Thus, broadly defined, the purpose of this book is threefold,— psychological, metaphysical, and practical. As a psychological analysis, it is especially concerned with the higher or spiritual nature of man. As a philosophical discussion, it aims to develop a generally sound view of reality by a consideration of materialism, agnosticism, and mysticism, in the light of their shortcomings when compared with the demands both of reason and the spiritual sense. It points out many important distinctions essential to a just view of life, and indicates the dangers of pantheism and of all one-sided conceptions of the universe. In its practical aspect it urges the same need of breadth and discrimination which it finds essential to a sound doctrine of reality. It is an urgent appeal to life, a plea for the realization of ethics, and the application of spiritual law in every moment of existence. But its threefold purpose and its individual confessions of faith are alike subservient to the one central idea for which it stands,— the unity of all that exists in an ultimate spiritual reality. In ways we know not, and in moments when we least expect it, the Spirit makes its presence known in the soul. If the reader discovers these traces of a living reality amidst the finite approximations and shows of truth, the book will have served its purpose as a stepping-stone to the higher life.

H. W. D.

19 Blagden Street, Boston, Mass.,
September, 1896.

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THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE PERFECT WHOLE.

SYNOPSIS.

THERE is and could be but one ultimate, omnipresent, and eternal Reality, the beginning, substance, and completion of all that exists, absolute, omniscient, and self-subsistent,— the living God.

From this ultimate source, yet still within and never independent of it, all beings and things proceed.

The one Reality is eternally made known as both itself,— pure wisdom and perfect love, free, spaceless, timeless, and self-caused, completely self-knowing, and possessing a character which is the sufficient ground of our world,— and as the varied universe of its own consciousness, of finite life and natural law, of appearance and imperfection; aspiring, incomplete, dependent, yet ever partaking of the life and contributing to the beauty of the boundless Whole.

Man, the individualized manifestation of the perfect Life, is thus in reality part of a Whole whence he derives all that he is, all that he thinks and feels. The slightest thought, the most mysterious experience, and the hardest task therefore bear some relation to the perfect life of the All.

Human experience is everywhere twofold: development proceeds through the interaction of opposites, conflict is

the price of peace, and all knowledge is gained through contrast.

There is no absolute error, no unmixed evil, and no unknowable Thing-in-itself; for whatever exists bears some reference to the one Reality, and is therefore intelligible.

In knowing himself and the universe, man thus far knows the eternal Reality whose wisdom transcends, yet includes his own.

In the interpretation of experience every detail, every experience, and all the products both of intuition and of reason are essential: their unity is to be found in the Spirit out of which all diversities grow.

The one great essential in human life is to become deeply conscious of this eternal relationship, to learn its individual meaning, to co-operate with the uplifting Spirit within, to attain peace, equanimity, and health through willing service and obedience, through comprehensive thinking and many-sided development.

The Whole, as discovered in nature, is the object of completed physical science.

The Whole, as found in human society and studied as an interdependent moral organism, constitutes universal ethics and sociology.

The Whole, as revealed by the spiritual sense, shorn of all extraneous forms and creeds, is the basis of universal religion.

The Whole, as found and interpreted in the total universe, as a rational system and an ultimate reality, is the foundation of universal philosophy.

I.

EXPERIENCE.

"All are needed by each one;
Nothing is fair or good alone."

At some time in life the reflective mind awakes to the consciousness that it desires to know the origin and meaning of things. It can hardly tell how it came by that longing, or why so many facts have been passed by without awakening a desire to know their ultimate value. The mind simply discovers itself existing, — expectant, wondering, and awe-inspired, — a critical spectator of things, beings, and events without, and of a continuous stream of thought within. Anterior to the moment of discovery an endless current of events stretches backward over the years of thought that can never be recalled. The moment of thought which brought the discovery prominently forward as a turning-point in life is gone almost before one is aware. And onward from the ever-advancing moment one contemplates the approaching rush of ideas and the great spectacle of varying physical phenomena, in which one can only seize now and then a thought or register an impression amid the

great whole whose wealth of relations is endless.

If we confine our attention to the inner or mental aspect of this great flux of events, a single analysis gives but little satisfaction. Sensations of light, pleasant sounds caused by the ebb and flow of the surf upon the shore, the whispering of the wind in the tree-tops or the singing of birds, impressions of heat and cold, of touch and taste, are brought in upon the consciousness amidst impressions which furnish inexhaustible food for thought. But, in order to rationalize these varied impressions and get some sense of their unity, one must constantly draw upon the memory, and patiently trace out the complex series of relations which the moment involves into some sort of system, comparing the self or experience of to-day with aspects of the self now no longer manifested. The passing moment is incalculably rich in suggestion for the thoughtful, and is always capable of yielding some fact of importance, though one be plunged in the depths of the profoundest sorrow and discouragement. Yet, when one tries to stop the thought-stream in its course and learn the meaning of these fleeting states of emotion, how insignificant and elusive seems the self which sits there, a curious and ever-watchful spectator of its own vain cogitations! The self is ever active,

willing, rejoicing, suffering, and searching; yet it can never quite seize its own essence. Mere human wit seems incompetent to make much headway in the great search for the heart of life. One waits for some golden moment when life may perchance reveal its secret in passing, and put an end to this petty inquiry into the great mysteries of thought. There are, indeed, times when a sublime and unmistakable conviction is present in consciousness, bearing its own evidence with it. It is these hidden touches of truth in our poor descriptions of life which give them their only permanent value. Out of these secret pencillings of the higher self one can in time formulate a general scheme of the meaning of things, trusting to the instinct of the reader to restore the original setting, shorn of the crude details which inevitably encumber all our attempts to reproduce the real. It is, therefore, the highest office of philosophy so to suggest this deeper background of truth, or the Perfect Whole, that the inaccuracies due to short-sightedness, temperament, and the limitations of language, may be forgotten in the recognition and presence of the limitless essence thus inadequately and partially described.

Postponing, however, until the following chapters a more detailed account of these divine moments of consciousness, interspersed among

the hours and days of human endeavor, let us at first view life from its outer aspect, where the pathway seems more familiar. Here, apparently, one is in the presence of that which is far more substantial and permanent than the elusive stream of thought. Of one great fact, indeed, every thinker feels personally and indubitably sure from the outset. Whatever the nature of things may be, he is unmistakably included in a universe not of his own finite conscious devising. Around and above him the great world extends throughout the height and depth, the length and breadth, of boundless space. The ground is firm and unyielding beneath his feet, rugged mountains, great reaches of land and sea swept by storms and presenting varied aspects with the changing seasons, impress him with his own relatively insignificant place in this vast series of events which he seeks to understand. The presence of his fellow-creatures, existing in all stages of society, from the barbarous savage to the refined people of civilization's most advanced centres, and manifesting innumerable motives, passions, inequalities, and characteristics, again convinces him of his minor importance in the world, and suggests a thousand perplexing questions apparently complicating life's problem beyond all hope of solution. He must resort to the man of science in order to hear the story of how our earth

came into being and reached its present inhabited stage through æons of change. Poet, historian, and artist must join with the specialist in all branches of human learning to tell him what may be known of man's past and present history, and thus extend his consciousness little by little until it includes some sense of the vastness and variety of human experience. And his own experience, in close contact with society, must be developed to the full in order to teach him that most vital of all aspects in this great series of events, — that which makes it thoroughly human and brings him near the heart of love, of struggle and victory, of joy and sorrow.

One fact, however, of prime importance at once simplifies our problem. Experience, even in this intensely human world, where the wise men of all the ages have labored to grasp its wealth and interpret its meaning, is everywhere characterized by certain principles or laws. All things in the world about us exist in certain uniform relations of substance, motion, and growth. Every one learns to look for the rising or setting of the sun at a given hour, varying with the season of the year. Fire always burns under similar conditions, water always seeks its level, and an apple is sure to fall when loosened from the tree, just as we have observed it in our little plot of earth. Modern science is composed

of just such well-known common-sense predictions as this, and our whole nature-world has been defined by Mill as a "permanent possibility of sensation." What we mean by nature in the last analysis, then, is not just so many distinct objects and forces existing out there independent of us; but we describe it by stating how it affects us under given conditions, the climatic changes we encountered in a certain zone, the effect produced by a storm, or what we saw in the jungle. Whatever lies beyond human experience is most certainly an unknown world, and this statement applies with particular emphasis to the facts of our inner life. The ravings of the maniac are for him matters of experience, for the moment emphatically real; and, to cure him, it is necessary to broaden his experience. In the long run we know ourselves through remembered experience. What we mean by space, time, God, the universe, man, is so many ideal constructions from experience; for the world or any given object in it, and our ripened and classified knowledge of it, were not thrust upon the mind ready-made from infancy. The race has learned from long observation, based on repeated experiences, that bodies everywhere occupy space, that time is required for growth and for the accomplishment of any physical operation, and that no event, however slight its importance, happens

uncaused. Thus all educated men have come to recognize the existence of a law-governed world, which may be described in terms of space, time, and causality. This world is variously known as "the world of description," the world of physical phenomena, forces, and laws, or the world of primary and secondary qualities. It is a world of spatial, temporal, and causal qualities grounded in relation, the world that exists for everybody, and is throughout characterized by the same general principles. The one great effort of truth-loving man is to learn what actually exists around him, and to describe it as one would picture an emotion or a beautiful landscape, so that another will know what the emotion means or will recognize the landscape when it is seen. Here, however, we encounter our first serious difficulty in the effort to learn from others what experience really is. Men quickly agree concerning the existence of certain fundamental qualities which exist for all; for experience has repeatedly told them that they must obey certain laws in order to avoid pain and act in accordance with others in order to have pleasure. But, as the physical or outer side of experience is scarcely one-half of human life, when you question them concerning the meaning of it all, they are prone to state their own emotional or dogmatic interpretation of it, to offer

you all sorts of opinions, hasty reflections and beliefs instead of a rationalized account carefully compared with the experiences of other men; and the materialist is no exception. A dreary round for some, a relentless mystery for others, a paradox of sorrow and pleasure, of sin and saintliness, — where all endeavor is vain and all moralizing tedious, — experience leaves some characteristic and individual impression upon all. Some have been soured by it, some elevated and purified. Seek out the temper of the observers, and you shall find a miracle of difference separating two people who have faced parallel facts. Prosaic minds ask, Is life worth living? The poet blesses fate that he is permitted to exist.

"Life is a comedy to those who think," says Horace Walpole, "a tragedy to those who feel." That there is a truth of poetry and a truth of prose, an ideal and a real, every one feels who has taken even the most superficial glance over the world of life and letters. What we desire is to know what life is in itself, apart from yet including all particular descriptions of it. Individual descriptions might perhaps suffice if it were generally understood that, as the man is, so is his philosophical system, and that the true value of any system, of any book, and of any man, lies precisely in these limitations. But

the doubt still remains to perplex us in most cases, whether we really know what we do believe.

These difficulties are brought home to us by asking ourselves, What account could we give of the world, were we suddenly called away from it and an inquiry made concerning what it had taught us? Could we describe the objective worlds of nature and of human society as related to consciousness, and tell what we mean by the finite self in its deeper aspects? Or should we tacitly confess our ignorance of self by trying to substitute a system of borrowed opinions about the world, about human nature and our own neglected consciousness? Are we really as badly off as we affirm, and do the so-called pleasures of life, the complaints and fine conceits of conversation, correspond to the actual sentiment in that inmost sanctuary of self-consciousness where no one may enter but its possessor? Were we really unselfish when we seemed to deny ourselves so heartily for another's good, or was there a lurking sense of pride which we would scarcely admit even to ourselves?

Such considerations as these, leading even the layman to doubt whether he ever really stated his deepest truth, cause one to turn to the history of thought with considerable suspicion. The western physicist will tell you that nature is uniform,

progressive, and governed by exact laws. The Hindu will probably tell you that it is essentially chaotic, the product of unpredictable caprice. Schopenhauer, in common with the Buddhists, affirms natural existence to be evil, rooted in ignorance and illusion, from which one may only escape by the annihilation of desire. Pessimism for him, then, is the only real basis of religion; while the optimist believes that, viewed in the light of the whole, life is thoroughly good, and hope is therefore the true basis of all spiritual doctrine. For the majority of mankind, self and dogma are the two idols before which all should give way; while, on the other hand, the mystic even denies his own personal existence. The student of systematic thought, as he turns over the great books of the world, its varied philosophies of materialism, idealism, pantheism, and the rest; its innumerable religions, varying from fetichism, polytheism, and nature-worship to the great moral and spiritual doctrines of the East, all standing for some need, some aspiration and aspect of human society, all claiming to be true, yet all necessarily in some sense false; and even as he considers the variance of opinion among the relatively small body of nineteenth-century scientists, — the student is awed by the wealth of human speculation and thought, and is almost at a loss to know what to

believe about life and about men. For people accept the most incongruous beliefs with "smiling complacency." Side by side with the ardent believer, enslaved by a dogmatism which pretends to rest on an infallible revelation, one shall find the agnostic who is in doubt whether to believe at all. Personalities and personal emotions, prejudices and preconceptions, are often far more powerful factors than pure love of truth.

Even he who, thus looking over the field of human thought, is impressed by the subtle effects everywhere observable of environment, of race, inheritance, personality, and of self-interest, sets out to pursue truth for its own sake, regardless of results, is beset by an exceptional and relentless fate which not even the man of genius may wholly overcome. Let him labor as he may during years of persistent inquiry, tempered by a constant effort to rid himself of every vestige of preconception, something essential will still be lacking to complete his deepest truth. In order to test the worth of human emotion, he must view it dispassionately; yet feeling is the very essence of life. If the thinker at last breaks loose from the bonds of conservatism, education, and society, his whole being suffers from the austere and secluded life which his own ideal imposes upon him. The tendency is to construct an artificial system of thought, divorced from

actual experience; while people at large betray a painful lack of the calm, systematic thinking which distinguishes the philosopher from his fellows.

The universal failing of all our discussions about life is generalization on the basis of a relatively small number of instances. We have had a few experiences whose meaning is so clear to us that we thereupon judge all human life to be similar. A certain doctrine happens to fit our case, and is accordingly but irrationally deemed a universal specific. The attempt is therefore made to measure all life by our own petty experience, and to limit the universe by a view of it which may perhaps be contradicted by our nearest neighbor, whom we dogmatically ignore. The formulas and material illustrations of the physical scientist are, after all, just his way of describing the world. Other men may describe it very differently, and he is dogmatic in the extreme who asserts that the experience of the seer or saint is bare self-delusion simply because it contradicts scientific observation.

The same one-sidedness of thought and development is encountered in the practical world of daily life. Private and financial interests lead nearly every one to specialize, — in business, in education, in every line of human endeavor. Quicken a man's interest in so-called spiritual

things, and you shall find him neglecting his body and the interests of his physical life. A mistaken philosophy, reappearing in new forms, has for ages sanctioned this neglect; and a current phase of the doctrine assures us that we should avoid giving attention to "externals." Other people are starving their spiritual natures by excessive devotion to lifeless dogmas and the enticing pleasures of social and intellectual life. Everywhere one finds a want of balance between theory and practice, mind and body, culture and the spirit, the demands of self and the needs of others; between the receiving, accumulating, and developing of property and ideas, and the just distribution of that which is rightfully ours only that we may share it. Fragments of men one may find, — good theorists, laborers, and servants; but how far one must search for the well-rounded character, equally sound in mind and body, whose life spontaneously and easily maintains its equilibrium, with that balance of spirit and form typified by those rare musicians in whom melody and technique are so combined that they sing or play in perfect tune.

Nearly every attempt to account for experience is characterized by undue emphasis of one side of life at the expense of the other. Evolution and matter, or thought and mind, are thus made to do double service, according to the point of

view. Sometimes the effort is made to force everything into the relations of space and time, to describe the entire universe and its ineffable origin in terms of a progressive experience. Again, great stress is laid upon the abstract or eternal, everything is declared to be perfect now, there is no need of experience or evolution, there is, in fact, no concrete world, no substantial universe, and no space or time. Many theories of life are based on a fundamental distinction or duality in which eternity and time, the absolute and concrete, God and his world, are set over against each other in perpetual contrast. Or, again, one side is declared to be real, harmonious, permanent, while the other is illusion, self-contradictory, and fleeting.

Nature seems to justify this growing suspicion that the universe is an unresolvable paradox, and daily experience itself apparently justifies the conclusion. Everywhere one finds a duality of substance and form, matter and force, positive and negative, odd and even, male and female, involution and evolution, mental and material, inner and outer, faith and reason, higher and lower, cause and effect. Higher still, time and eternity, the spatial and non-spatial, the conditioned and the unconditioned, law and freedom, the one and the many, the absolute and the relative, seem forever contrasted; and the paradox of

the infinite and the finite is apparently the greatest mystery of being. In the moral world, good and evil, selfishness and self-sacrifice, are in continual conflict. Intellectually speaking, there are a thousand reasons for affirming the everlasting discrepancy of things. Men are not born free and equal, but are condemned to a life of unjust distribution of this world's goods. Conflict, struggle, injustice, and oppression, the eternal pursuit of happiness and truth with the goal still unattainable, the will of man and the will of God in never-ending conflict,—is not this life? and why not accept it as such, and forego the pursuit of that which is fated to elude us?

It needs no argument to show that, if the world be an eternal paradox, then there is no higher intellectual aim than to describe life with all its inconsistencies, and unsparingly expose the narrowness of human thought and conduct. Everything has at least two sides.

> "Nothing in the world is single.
> All things by a law divine
> In one another's being mingle."

If the spiritual sense makes known a realm unrecognized by physical science, then we must describe both. Since the two sides of being exist, we cannot consistently deny them in theory or practice. A description of one alone is not the

truth: it is simply a point of view. Every expression of opinion, however high the authority, every philosophy, every religion, every human thought, every human life, is explicitly and necessarily a single point of view. But the reality of life is not one side alone: it is the whole. Both must be stated, even if good and evil, mind and matter, eternity and time, appear to be incompatible; and, if philosophy is not broad enough to compass the two, then it cannot become truth. It is to be carefully noted, however, that nature's balance is due to a striving of opposite forces. Nature is founded on just such a paradox of contradictories as the history of philosophy and the moral world present. Our bodies and all forms about us maintain their shape and position in space, not by virtue of one harmonious force, but through the equilibrium of centripetal and centrifugal forces, either one of which, if in the ascendency, would tear them asunder. We are able to move our bodies through space or lift a weight from the ground only when the force exerted is greater than the resistance offered by the atmosphere or by the body to be moved. Nature's unity is ever a synthesis of opposites struggling against each other, and without them life could not be.* Take away

*This principle was first stated by Heraclitus, who maintained that everything is composed of contraries: harmony is the union of conflicting impulses, due to the necessary opposition or separation of that which is in essence one.

one atom from either side, and nature's entire mechanism would go off on a tangent. The planets are held to a uniform pathway in their course round the sun by just such a finely balanced arrangement. Every object in the physical world, from the greatest sun to the tiniest atom, is drawn and pulled by mighty powers, all tending to bring chaos and confusion into the stellar and molecular systems. Yet all these forces and all these rapidly revolving bodies exist together in a single organism. The very fact that such paradoxical forces exist side by side in one universe is a proof that fundamentally the universe is a harmony.

Here is a fact of the utmost moral and spiritual importance. It cannot be too strongly insisted upon. The universe is not fundamentally and really a paradox, but a Perfect Whole; for otherwise it could not be. Since this whole is literally and absolutely the All, it excludes nothing, — neither so-called evil, error, nor illusion: it absorbs everything, it *is* everything, and it knows no real opposition. The place and necessity of this reciprocity, compensation, two-sidedness, and balance, are illustrated by every fact in life, alike in the mental and in the physical worlds; for the law is common to both. Nothing leaps into being. A plant cannot blossom until it has reached the proper stage. My

success in any undertaking is commensurate with the energy I put forth. If I meet a man whose presence is wonderfully stimulating, it is because we have something in common and because my past experience, my desires and thought, have prepared me for this new development. In order to know a thing, I "must have a share of its nature in myself." All our relations with the world depend on ourselves and on what the world is. For everything that we see without, there is some corresponding mental state within; and whether we are happy or miserable, successful or unsuccessful, wise or ignorant, depends more upon our mental attitude than upon the most fixed and fateful conditions of nature. Fate, evil, and suffering, as we shall see, are in fact so many unyielding obstacles or are plastic and comprehensible, according as we view them.

Life loses half its mystery and gains wonderfully in interest for us when we at last comprehend this universal law of action and reaction, or reciprocity, and learn its application in individual experience. Until then we attribute our misery to our friends, the universe, some fictitious god or devil, to anything or anybody but the real cause. We grumble and complain, sin, and persuade ourselves that we can not only escape the penalty, but get something for nothing. Yet everything in the universe is known and won,

through its equivalent, by paying its price. "It is a fundamental law of the human mind," says John Fiske, "that things are distinguishable only by their unlikeness. We know nothing save as contrasted with something else. If we knew but one color, we should know no color at all. If our ears were filled with the roar of Niagara, unbroken by any other sound, the effect on our consciousness would be absolute silence. Had we never known pain, we should never know pleasure. . . . Evil is simply the lower state of living as looked at from the higher state." Let this principle be thoroughly understood once for all, and we shall have a clew to the interpretation of the darkest pages of life's history. For it is clear that the genuine truth-seeker can ignore no facts. Any doctrine which has won general acceptance contains an element of truth, — truth as seen from a particular point of view. And oftentimes there is no safer guide to the common ground of human experience than to study the most antagonistic views of it. Any truth, any experience, any fact or emotion, however true for us, needs its complement. Every man is in some respect incomplete, unbalanced, undeveloped, until he not only learns the great lesson of experience, — namely, wholeness, poise, beauty, harmony, — but actually, conscientiously, and persistently supplies what is lacking. If the reader

will take this one truth home and test it, the following pages will be of value in proportion to the understanding and application of this great law of the parts and their whole, the given experience or thought and its complement, the inner and the outer, the one side and the other; for this principle is fundamental to a just interpretation of life.

Our first generalization, then, is this: that experience is twofold. We found it so at the outset, when the mind, in wonder and awe, observed itself as an inseparable part of nature on the one hand, and part of a continuous thought-stream on the other. It is through contrast and comparison that you and I, as truth-seekers, discover our unlikeness in a harmonious world-order which contains us both. The wonderful breadth and beauty of experience impresses us on the one hand, — its simplicity and unity through law and the balance of opposites, — and the striking dissimilarity and limitation of finite experience on the other. Everything, when looked at by itself, aspires to completion in the whole. Everything that is mysterious in itself becomes intelligible when set in contrast. Any philosophy of life, however satisfactory in a general way and though it be the product of ages of thought, decreases in value and interest for us in proportion as it falls short of the rounded whole. On the other

hand, experience grows in intelligibility and beauty to the degree that we consciously share its universal life.

Sometimes, in conversing with men of different types of character, and in passing from book to book in the world of thought, one really feels that a single soul imbues them all, that one soul has written all the books in the world. The universal genius by virtue of his many-sidedness recognizes himself in everybody and everybody in himself. Side by side in one experience the utmost contrasts exist; and the soul, passing itself in review, turns from passions which link it to the brutes to virtues which make it the equal of angels. That which in other men constitutes their talent for business, art, music, poetry, even for sinfulness, self-assertion, and pessimism, exists also in the observer, but has never been emphasized or developed. In estimating the value of the whole, not one fact can be sacrificed. In a word, everything in the miniature world of finite experience is a clew to the greater experience which includes it, every detail will throw some light on the whole, if it be viewed in its twofold aspect.

Furthermore, there is present in this twofold experience, as we noted at the outset, the will or desire to know its meaning. The opposed sides of life, internal and external, mental and physi-

cal, are thus *held in their unity by the person* who possesses and seeks to understand them. This trinity runs through all our experience, and is a clew to the harmony of the universe at large. Always there is the feeling and the felt, and the attention fixed upon it; the sensation, the thought, and the will; the perception, the intellection, and the self or centre of experience beholding itself as perceiving, thinking, and willing. The term "experience" exhausts all that we mean by life, the universe and God; for we only know of things, of the world, of persons, or even the higher spiritual illuminations, in so far as they come within experience, — that is, within feeling, thought, and will. Experience is thus a boundless whole whose basis is to be sought in the realm of the unseen or eternal, and it is intelligible to us in proportion to our threefold understanding of it. All that we have seen, all that we have touched, handled, heard, suffered, enjoyed, loved, desired, and thought, all that we are as human beings, belongs here. Experience in the profoundest sense is *one;* for we never escape from it, nor are our faintest emotions separated from this infinite whole. The one central question is to know whose experience it really is, how it is that we all belong together, and how we are to act toward one another through this inseparable union. The ideal which will most

safely guide us throughout is this fundamental relationship of opposites; namely, to discover the two contrasted aspects of experience, and then put them together in that which knows their unity. How shall we realize this ideal both in philosophy and in practical life? By ceasing to reach out for that which is afar from us in time, for some distant heaven and some supernatural truth, and quietly, peacefully, thoughtfully, settle down to a patient discovery of that which exists here and now. The Whole, the Divine Spirit, or Father, is here seeking recognition, even in the trivial facts and the despised evils and errors from which we have turned in scorn. To know the Whole as it is progressively revealed in experience is the eternal truth. Again and again all that we seek to know, all that we seek to be, is made manifest. Again and again it presents itself to us for recognition; and we pass it by, because we have wrong ideas as to its place and nature. We have tried to square the world to our ideas of it: it is now time to make our consciousness conform to that which eternally exists.

It is well, then, to note from the outset that experience, as intellectually apprehended, falls into two divisions, direct and indirect. Direct or immediate experience originates in the world of qualities and relations. Indirect experience is our own mental reaction upon the world, the

attempt to comprehend it by means of ideas. The first is the fact-world, the world of streaming events, of the solid earth, of mountains, seas, storms; of struggles, pain, and pleasure; of the vital presence to us of our bodies and the inner realm of living emotions, — so far as that world exists as a basis of existence for all mankind. The second is the thought-world, the attempt to imitate or reproduce the nature of things and their real or supposed relations: it is the narrow world of human speculation and one-sided development which began to perplex us as soon as we asked the question, What does experience really mean? The former is the concrete, the substantive, the realm of immediate feeling or intuition. The latter is the abstract, the adjective, the secondary. Thought, then, and human truth, error, belief, theory, all that constitutes our knowledge of the world, is an abstraction from the realm of feeling. Feeling, intuition, mere being, is not intelligible alone: it must be thought about. On the other hand, thought is never complete in itself, though it be uttered by the profoundest philosopher in the world, because it is an abstraction from the sphere of primary experience, and needs to be completed by the living Whole. Thought and existence are in truth inseparable. Each must complete the other. Each supplements and is

absorbed by the other. Only the absolute and exhaustive Unity is the real. Only that consciousness which is at once intuition and reason combined into one living realization — an experience greater than finite truth and greater than feeling — is capable of revealing the veritable Whole.

Experience, then, for each finite being is a fragment intended to make us think and to find its completion in the Whole. The thought-stream, the elusive self observing it, and the struggling law-governed outer world which man ever seeks to reconstruct in thought are just so many brute facts to torment and evade us until we learn the relation of our finitude to that which includes it. Then each fact, all our narrowness of thought and conduct, becomes aglow with the higher light shining from within. There is another and a grander realm of experience lying beneath the shifting phenomena of mind and matter. To know it and to learn what our total experience means, we must come to judgment in our souls, come face to face with the finite self in all its simplicity, and seek there — in the domain of consciousness — the way of escape into the Spirit which holds all that is so paradoxical to the intellect in one completed harmonious experience.

II.

A STUDY OF SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS.

"Know thyself."

FUNDAMENTALLY, no fact is more certain in human life than the experience of consciousness, no fact is more significant in our relations with the outer world and in our dealings with men. Yet no fact is so much neglected; for, until we learn to think fundamentally, life seems to be sternly material. On all sides massive and unyielding substances stand persistently in our way. Painful sensations intrude upon us, and force us to realize how little power we possess over the stolid outer world. It requires but little to disturb our equanimity, and the mind enjoys harmonious self-expression only when the bodily conditions are such as to present no obstacle. The world seems like a great law-governed machine, whirling us along in its course and compelling us to obey its rhythmic order. Yet that which is fixed and absolute in experience is our way of having it, its character, laws, and twofold nature. So far as its inner aspect is concerned, it differs with each individual; and we

are made aware of this well-governed outer world to the degree only that its laws and phenomena are translated into the language of consciousness. We discover the real difference between ourselves and another, between ourselves and this fateful outer world, only so far as our minds, not our bodies, are compared. The most material occupation in life is learned and governed by thought. From the beginning of life to its close some dominant idea is ever uppermost, directing the activities of the body and giving shape to the ever-changing phenomena of our emotional consciousness. We seem to be creatures of bodily habit; but all habits are the result of continued mental activity in a given direction, originating in conscious effort. Instinct and impulse govern many phases of our physical life, yet these in turn are fundamentally so many additional aspects of the inner life; and to know why we act, suffer, rejoice, and express ourselves as we do, we must, first of all, understand the consciousness wherein these varied streams of activity take their rise. The great world of nature seems to exist independently of our thought. Clearly defined objects, houses, trees, vast reaches of meadow and upland, extend far beyond us in space, — as we have recognized in the foregoing chapter, — and are apparently the same huge realities for every observer. We habitually deal

with them as though they were so many distinct individuals, seldom reflecting that nature with its ponderable bodies and its varied mutations is thus vividly real and distinct for us because of our own mental life. Yet, in order to behold all this, we must first become *conscious* of it. All sensations of resistance, sound, light, heat, despite their apparent objective nature, are primarily modes in which our minds are affected. Our perceptions are in fact *within* the mind, the intellectual counterparts of the great world of outer objects, the joint products of objective and subjective elements; and without a receptive, observant mind, capable of gathering impressions from without, we could never know of the existence of the most substantial outer world. The beautiful colors, for example, which we detect in flowers and in the sky at sunset, would not exist for us, even with the wonderful mechanism of the eye whereby the vibrations of the ether are transformed, if there were no mind to perceive and compare them. We know a color, a house, a person, or a star when we see it, but only because we gather certain impressions into one general idea as related to our well-trained minds. The mind must therefore co-operate with that which lies beyond it, in order for experience to be possible at all; and an infinite number of worlds of varied forms of energy might pass by

us unnoticed if we lacked the proper organism to perceive and understand them.

The desire, then, to answer the great questions, Whence? What? Whither? resolves itself into an inquiry concerning the general nature of mind in its relation to the objective world. In the last analysis, every fact in experience is definable, if at all, in terms of consciousness; while consciousness cannot be adequately defined, because we cannot pass beyond it. Primarily, we are minds, we can only perceive mind. We cannot touch, taste, see matter as something apart by itself; but everything first assumes its conscious shape, and then appeals to us as if it were separately real. Moreover, everything in our mental life is known to us in individual terms. We do not say, "I am a sensation, a perception, or thought," but "I *have* ideas, feelings, a body," thus admitting, when we use language strictly, the existence of a self or soul, the possessor of a wealth of incommunicable experience bound up in the little word "I." All thoughts, perceptions, and emotions are parts of *one* consciousness, so that, as far as a given human experience extends, even to the world of human society and the stars, so much of it as I grasp is "my world." The world, it is true, may be infinitely larger than my consciousness of it; but it only becomes mine, and it is wholly mine, to

the degree that my intelligence enables me to apprehend it. The peopled world of the superstitious and imaginative savage is thus infinitely removed from the cold matter-of-fact world of the physicist or the joyfully beautiful world of the poet.

Despite the fact, however, that the world varies so widely for different observers, we must not make the mistake to suppose that experience is purely a subjective world, while matter is a mere illusion. The mind must occupy its proper place in our discussion, and in this material age one cannot too strongly insist that it is fundamental and supreme. But we have seen that experience is both direct and indirect, and we are now developing the inner or conscious aspect of the twofold stream of events with which our discussion began. This dual relationship, repeated on the conscious side of experience, will become clear if we consider self-consciousness in the light of its origin and of its most important stages.

1. When the human spirit first awakens to consciousness in this glad world, it probably becomes aware of a confused whole of sensations or impressions. It is not yet aware of itself as distinguished from its primitive feelings. It is not even conscious of separate sensations of light,

sound, heat, and cold. It is simply conscious; and that conscious state is an interrelated mass in which every element blends imperceptibly with its neighbor, however incongruous, and includes the baby selfhood in its indiscriminate whole. Yet the infant ego is already in its first instant of conscious life in the presence of a whole of experience which, through its future development, is to constitute the sole reality of its entire life. It unwittingly knows the fact that something real exists in receiving its first sensation. Its consciousness is a part, an inseparable part, of the great whole of immediate experience. Although it is utterly ignorant of this first experience and removed by years of patient thought from the reality which the philosopher distinguishes from appearance, the absolute and eternal Reality is nevertheless there in that highly important first moment of consciousness, — if it is ever to be present at all.

> "Not in utter nakedness,
> But trailing clouds of glory, do we come
> From God, who is our home:
> Heaven lies about us in our infancy."

Around the infant ego extend the relations which link it indissolubly to all that exists or ever could exist. The second moment of experience possesses increased value to the degree only that

it enriches or throws light upon the first. Could the infant know all that is related to that first moment, as an inseparable part of the infinite series of relations and qualities finding their ground in the ultimate All, the infant would be omniscient. An omniscient Self or God would possess all this at once. The finite self, just because it is finite, must develop these relations bit by bit through temporal and spatial experience.

After a time the infant begins to observe objects located around it in space. Then these objects are discovered to be separate from itself, some of them move about and make sounds and betray emotions similar to those manifested by the infant. Impressions thus received are gradually welded together until finally the simple concept of a "person" is developed in the baby's mind. The enrichment of further impressions from the whole thus slowly brings out the capability of one element of consciousness to act as subject as related to the remainder which now becomes object, and is in time differentiated into diverse sensations of pleasure and pain, reactions aroused by those sensations, and all the diversities of content, as opposed to unity of self, which characterize human experience. Life for the baby is now composed of self and not-self; and, as soon as it fairly grasps this distinction

between its fellows and its self, it is at last unmistakably self-conscious. With awareness of its fellows as leading analogous lives comes the rich gift of language, of co-operative, organized, and corrective thought. The child is now fairly launched in its career as a personal observer of the great drama of life. The first dim perceptions have come that the world is not what it seems, that there is a reality in life which will not be thwarted. Slowly the lifelong process begins of distinguishing reality from illusion, the outer world from the inner, fate from freedom; and at every stage this development is made possible by one factor alone, — namely, mind, conscious mind seeking to grasp life's great meaning. We cannot too often remind ourselves that without the cultivated ability to construct the world intelligibly in consciousness, without mind, thought, reason, the world would still be for us the confused whole of infancy.

One fact is to be particularly noted in this earliest as indeed in all stages of consciousness. The finite ego is made aware of itself in relation to an "other," an external somewhat or self. The infant discovers other people, and then finds that it, too, is a self with desires, will, and the ability to act. Again, we know of the existence of other selves only by analogy. We compare notes with them, and discover that they

think, feel, suffer, and enjoy in the same general way: we therefore conclude that they are minds or selves. The world or "other" which we observe in common with our fellows is the realm of immediate or primary experience. What this "other" is in deepest truth we shall consider in the next chapter. How far it is the same for you and me depends, as we have noted, upon its qualities and laws. But this much is clear from the foregoing considerations; that without an "other," without self and not-self in contrast, we should never become self-conscious, — in fact, without this twofold relation we should never be conscious at all, we should not exist.

That this is a truth of daily experience for all will become evident if the reader will ask himself how he knows that there is an outer world. Clearly, as we have seen, because the outer world is brought into relation to his own organism. He must touch it, taste, see it, hear it, or come into contact with it some way; and all this must be translated into conscious states. The hardest substance is discovered to be such by attempting to lift it or by pressing against it in some way, just as the infant learns its relations with its fellows by attempting to go counter to their superior intelligence and power. Every change noted in the realm of nature implies a corresponding activity of the mind. A recent

writer* maintains that all we know concerning the outer world is due primarily to "differences of energy" between our senses and their surroundings. "In a world the temperature of which is everywhere that of our body, we would know nothing of heat, just as we have no idea of the constant atmospheric pressure under which we live, and as we never gain knowledge of it until we establish a different pressure." In the same way we know of the existence of our body by the changes in conditions of its energy, we feel it when some part of it is disturbed. In a word, we know of its existence only through its changing relations to our consciousness.

Consciousness, then, is the gradual discovery and discrimination of that which was at first present as a confused mass. We become aware first of wholes, then of parts, of lights and shades, and the endless variety among people and things which constitutes the novelty and surprise of human experience. Contrast is fundamental to consciousness; and without it our inner experience would be like an external world of one color, or a world where only the roar of Niagara should prevail. Without mind we could not know matter, and without changes of energy or contrast we would not possess mind. Extreme idealists,

*Professor Wilhelm Ostwald, "The Failure of Scientific Materialism," *Popular Science Monthly*, March, 1896.

on the one hand, and short-sighted materialists on the other, theoretically annihilate the entire universe and themselves by denying the existence of either mind or matter. The attempt to derive mind from matter is no less a failure. The two have evolved together, and are so many general instances of the two-sided experience which, beginning in infancy, extends through life. "If evolution is to work smoothly, consciousness in some form must have been present at the very origin of things," says Professor James.* Consciousness is always awareness *of* something perceived *by* something. "There is no music in the player or the piano," says T. B. Wakeman, "nor in the vibration of the air caused by the playing; but the correlate of that vibration as it affects our nervous system is the state of consciousness which we call music, and it resembles nothing whatever that produced it."

Every conscious state is thus ample evidence both of the existence of ideas and of some reality of which they are more or less imperfect copies. A vast realm of beautiful thoughts, mental images, and ideal pleasures, spreads out before the mind within, suggested by the impressions brought in upon us from without. The height and depth of man is measured by the range of his thought, and the world is proportionately

* Psychology, vol. i. p. 149.

intelligible and beautiful to the degree that the mind lies open to its higher and still higher planes of consciousness. With the awareness of each successive plane of being, — physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual; sensation, thought, ideals, and the living Presence, — a new world is added. Each plane, each new thought and emotion, becomes intelligible through the same beautiful law: we know them all through contrast, we learn what we are by becoming objective through what we do and think and feel. There is thus a constant interchange between subject and object, or observer and observed, within the same personality. An endless variety of selves emerge from the mysterious realm of the subject, oftentimes to the astonishment and wonder of the observer, — the physical ego, the social self, the self that is presented to one's kindred and the self that greets the stranger, the self that pretends to be happy when it is in truth thoroughly miserable, and that deeply reflective self which observes these petty egos, and tries to marshal them into some sort of consistency and frankness. As there is no hard and fast line between self and not-self, so there is no clear demarcation between the profound ego that knows and the variable ego that is known. He is indeed fortunate who knows some one of his selves with sufficient thoroughness to establish it as a starting-

point from which to comprehend the deep unity of them all.

One fact, however, must be patent to every one who has grasped this necessary and profoundly suggestive relationship of subject and object. In vain does a certain doctrine affirm that only the finite self exists, and in reality stands in no need of possessing an "other" or an objective world. This doctrine is known as solipsism; and it assures us that, when we seem to refer to an "other," when we talk about other selves, when we pray, when we will, we are really thinking about our own selves, praying to our selves, and it is all an illusion that other egos exist. It is in vain, I repeat, to affirm this; for it is only by relation with other minds and an unyielding outer world that we learn of our existence at all. Without the co-operation of other minds, without language, social fellowship, and experience of natural phenomena, we should be unable to organize and understand our conscious experience: we should have no conscious experience at all. This fact has great significance for the ethical life.

Our vain efforts to shape the world according to our will convince us, even in infancy, that we did not originate it nor dictate its laws. Not in one moment, not through one self alone, do we learn what we are; but the second moment

throws light upon the first, and the outer self reveals the inner. "No one of us knows what he now is. He can only know what he *was*. Each one of us, however, is *now* only what hereafter he *shall* find himself to be. This is the deepest paradox of the inner life. We get self-possession, self-apprehension, self-knowledge, only through endlessly fleeing from ourselves, and then turning back to look at what we were. . . . Youth does not know its own deep mind. Mature life or old age reflectively discovers a part of what youth meant, and sorrows now that the meaning is known only when the game is ended. . . . In order to realize what I am, I must become more than I am or than I know myself to be." * I am therefore included in a far larger Self, reality, or "other" than the self of any particular moment; and I understand even my included finite self only so far as experience has made some aspect of it objective. Every fresh aspect reveals great and unsuspected riches in the infinite depths of the "other." If all this belongs to *one* self, then that self is the Absolute, and is large enough to include the vast relations of space and time and all that modern science tells me about nature. It is you and I and countless other selves with their individual objects and

* Royce, "The Spirit of Modern Philosophy," Houghton, Mifflin & Co., pp. 206, 207. I have been much indebted to the discussions of Professor Royce in the preparation of these opening chapters.

their petty emotions. It is boundless and timeless: it knows no limitations and no opposition. It is no longer mere object and subject struggling in hopeless endeavor to discover which one is the master. It is the unity of all twofold experiences in one transcendent moment of eternal self-cognition. It is the one Spirit, the living God.

It is, therefore, much easier to see that the one self, the one experience which cannot be transcended because it is literally the All, is the absolute reality or God, than to locate the finite centre of our own evanescent consciousness. Mere awareness of self is very far from genuine self-knowledge. Morbid introspection is surely not true self-consciousness: it is a deviation into the painfully narrow realm where one's sensations, motives, and desires are greatly exaggerated, and where the range is so close that one is sure to be misled by all sorts of baseless fears and subjective spectres. The careful truth-seeker wisely steers clear of these dangerous inlets of the great thought-stream. Nor do all the elements of our conscious life, when put together, — perception, intellect, will, our aspirations, ideals, emotions and the moral and spiritual intuitions which we are to consider in later chapters, — give back all that we mean by "self"; for they are obviously manifestations of

something. There is not, in fact, a more elusive term in philosophy than this finite "self," this personality which we seek to be conscious of. The body is easily defined as a sentient organism through which the mind expresses itself and receives impressions from the physical world. It is clear that there is a gradation of substances from the dense bone up through the muscles, tissues, nerves, and brain to the mind, some of the upper terms of which are lacking; for we do not act directly on outer objects nor do outer objects act upon the mind. It is equally clear that the mind is so organized as to be unable to give full attention to more than one object at a time. It is obviously very much restricted, some predominant idea or emotion is uppermost in active consciousness; while the impressions arising from bodily feeling, the sounds and sights around us, shade off into that great realm of the subconscious where so much of our thinking is done. It must resort to all sorts of devices, fundamentally depending upon memory, in order to draw out of the storehouse of the subconscious self one by one the great facts of life, thereby getting some sense of life's total worth. All its knowledge is arranged in categories or pigeon-holes; and, as thus conceived, the self is little more than a point of observation so arranged as to perceive minute portions of the great whole of existence.

But what is this tenacious bit of mentality, this observer or subject which, obstinately refusing to become object, thus continually assures itself that it exists and makes self-consciousness possible, both knowing its own existence and perceiving its own moods as objects, yet never acknowledging its own identity?

We know fairly well what we mean by the term "personality" until we are asked to define it. We refer to the general atmosphere or quality of the individual, that subtle something which betrays the inmost character, the state of moral and spiritual development, — in a word, the soul. At times one seems to draw very near this sublimest aspect of the self. Great personalities speak to us from books, and shed a divine light upon the deeds and sayings of men. But the element we feel and by which we are elevated is not quite the living essence itself. Personality is that character by which we distinguish one individual from another; and there must surely be a permanent essence there to which all that pours forth to the world of genius, of poetry, music, wisdom, and the spirit, is fundamentally attributable. Personality is thus of itself a whole, a miniature or epitome of all that is best in the life of the individual. It speaks above words, and rises superior to all analysis. Yet its essence refuses to be defined in purely finite terms.

Indeed, when one turns aside from the outer world and clears away the accretions that have gathered about one's finitude, all that one finds there within is a vain shadow, like the dull reflection mirrored in the bottom of a well by which Lowell characterizes the shallow sentimentalists of the last century. People have a horror of such self-consciousness as this, where only the image of one's own insignificance is reflected back upon the egocentric observer. There are times, it is true, when one discovers a self that is conscious of boundless possibilities: the bodily condition for the time seems wholly unfit for their realization; but one feels competent to *make* it fit, to overcome every obstacle and express one's truest self in masterful accomplishment. Once more, however, one confesses that all this is fruitless until one really forgets one's self. And here at last is the solution of our difficulty.

In that painful moment when the finite self discovers its own nothingness it again turns by contrast to the larger Self, which, more than personality and more than mere self-recognition, includes all finite egos as so many organs of its divine activity. In the strictest sense, there could be but one individual, one dependent, self-subsistent ego. All finite egos exist by virtue of this, and can only be defined in relation to the one infinite or absolute Being, the sufficient basis

of all finite beings and things. The intuition which tells me this is the sublimest experience of life. How I, as a particular centre of feeling, thinking, and willing, differ from all other finite selves, I could not fully know, — while I am this particular self, — for knowledge is developed through contrast, and, in order to understand my complete self, I must be an omnipresent self, capable of knowing all selves at once in the light of their difference. But I can understand this intellectually as a possibility, and also perceive my all-knowing Self as a living intuition in those happy moments when I am lifted above mere finite self-consciousness.

Since, then, such an absolute Self exists, I am fully known, I am known far better than I could ever know myself; and I rejoice that this is so. If I could thus see myself as I fully am, I should probably find myself as one among many individuals, standing for some idea which no other soul is so well adapted to represent, a character which all other souls probably share in their own way. It is enough for me to know that I am needed. Life can never seem dull and unworthy of being so long as this consciousness persists. If I lose it, I have only myself to blame. I am fated to miss my true self until, having exhausted mere self-scrutiny, I await in silence, and let myself be discovered as a moment embosomed in eternity,

The Memorial Club,
Boston, Mass.

a word in the divine language, a quality of purest absolute being. That which a moment before seemed hard and fast limitation now appears in its true light as an element of beauty, inseparably and intimately relating the finite to the infinite. No self is complete until it thus becomes self-conscious. No self is in full self-possession until it knows itself in God. Here is the true subject which never could become object, for finite self-analysis; for, if it could, we should cease to be finite. Here is the joyous passage into the divine.

Tell me all that my true self is, then, and I shall know the universe. My deepest thinking is the coming to consciousness of that which is already present in the mind, awaiting its objective counterpart. The truth which my fellow-man teaches me I therefore already possessed — in germ. His thought makes me conscious of it, and enables me to express it. I know only what I am, and what I am experience alone teaches me to know. In the deepest truth of self-consciousness, then, I find the real justification of experience. The self of any given moment is like the experience of the bee imprisoned for an instant in the honey-laden flower and oblivious of the great world outside. The bee hums onward to the next flower; and so do I to my next moment, all the while cherishing up the memory of these

successive steps. I long to grasp all these moments in their unity, but now at last I know a Self that can grasp them. If at one moment I seem puny and ignorant, at another — in the ineffable moment of illumination — I am the heir of all the ages and of all wisdom. In these two moments I know myself first as finite, then as infinite. I did not seek out this my deepest truth. I did not reason it out. It sought me, and I recognized the Seeker. "Out of the darkness it came insensibly into the marvellous light of to-day."

2. Another and no less important aspect of self-consciousness is the process known as coming to judgment. In those quiet hours of reflection when the soul searches for tell-tale traces of itself, it suddenly flashes upon the mind that one has hitherto lived merely for self. Then how mean, infinitesimal, despisable, seems the life one has lived in comparison to the larger life of service and self-denial which now for the first time presents itself in all its beauty to the thought! All sermons, all good intentions, and all efforts to make one's self believe that one really is not selfish are fruitless up to this point. One really has not begun to live until now. Experience in the past was so much half-wasted preparation and indefinite postponement of life's great

lesson. Now life begins to be thoroughly worth the living, and the continual ennui of existence at last ceases forever. One's character stands out in all its ruggedness of detail: one's neglected opportunities, one's weakness, and one's strength are impressed upon the consciousness with unwonted emphasis. The stern beauty of the moral law enforces itself on one's consciousness with a power never to be forgotten. After this, not to obey will be to sin; and the soul sees before it the endless pathway of a life where the eternal right must ever triumph if one is to be worthy of the name of "man."

What grander word could, in fact, be applied to the faithful soul who thus perceives its own shortcomings and its limitless possibilities, and thereupon sets about to lead an ethical life? Man is man by virtue of his superiority over circumstances. Self-consciousness presents many troublesome problems for solution. Not all at once can the soul master its objective passions, and be truly ethical in its outer life. True wisdom consists in careful adjustment of means to ends, in slow, patient, persistent overcoming in close imitation of natural evolution, not in assuming that the victory is already won. It is a serious mistake to make this assumption. The entire life must be regenerated; and this is the work of time, for otherwise it is not healthy.

He is truly aware of the higher law who at last really begins to practise what he preaches, when he at last obeys the law, and ceases once for all to be a hypocrite. This it is to be a man: to be and not seem, to do and not simply to talk, to have the right ideal, the true motive, and patiently to transform conduct in accordance with it.

3. Self-consciousness in the larger sense, as the mind's awareness of its own operations, reveals no fact of greater practical importance than this discovery that desire is partial fulfilment. To desire the ideal, the true, the good, for its own sake, is to become aware that in our deepest Self we already possess it. Human experience is a progressive discovery or consciousness of that which is eternal. It is the eternal in detail, in time and space relations. Desire indicates the presence of that which seeks fulfilment through us. It is the ideal dwelling in and transmuting the so-called real, it is the purpose of the completed self. It is not, therefore, the personal self alone. That which knows its own end through us, of course knows how to fulfil that end. To become conscious of a weakness is to have won half the victory. To become conscious of the process, and yet to live above it, is to avoid the friction which ignorance once caused us.

This consciousness also saves one a deal of labor and anxiety. For if "the laborer is worthy of his hire," if that which is for us "gravitates to us," and desire or the right motive is the prime essential, why should we seek to perform the whole task ourselves? The simplest process is in this case, at least, unmistakably the highest. It is sublime trust that we need. It is the *idea* which leads us to the goal. If one has made a change for the better in one's conduct, and traced it back to some new determination fixed in the sub-conscious mind during a calm moment of self-consciousness, is there any better method than to make full use of this most efficient process? Nature is surely ready to do her part: it is ours to sow the seed.

We have seen that some specific idea is ever present during the waking state. The self is always absorbed in some definite line of thought; and, wherever the thought is turned, it carries with it the corresponding sub-conscious and neural activities. Will, desire, attention, thus characterizes the mind as a whole, and brings to a focus the scattering thoughts until they are concentrated into a given idea. If the subsequent state of mind be a morbid, unhappy one, we may know that we have turned in a wrong direction of thought. If it be productive of good, of quietness, and poise, it will increase with the attention

bestowed upon it. Mind and nervous system alike grow to the modes in which they are conjointly exercised. Habit is one of the conditions of progress; and, by consciously directing the attention until the idea is fixed in mind through repetition, one may establish new habits of wonderfully effective character. Sub-conscious nature will make sure to fulfil the desire; for desire, will, love, this is the very essence of life. Whatever we love in profoundest self-consciousness has behind it the resistless force of the entire universe to carry our ideal into execution. This one discovery that thought attracts its like, and that one may safely trust desire to attain harmonious fulfilment, is alone worth all the struggles of self-consciousness; for there is a wrong consciousness and a right self-consciousness. Thought will invite happiness or misery, according to its nature. Self-analysis will lead one more into self or far out beyond it, according to the degree of penetration. To stop half-way is to become imprisoned in the purely finite self, and to live in distasteful proximity to one's sensations. To live as much above the conscious process as possible, while still carrying it on and making the best use of it, marks a well-poised mind.

Self-consciousness, in fact, has so many lessons to teach us that we shall have to devote

several chapters to this same problem in another form. Everything depends at last upon the fundamental or conscious direction given to the great stream of events as it flows in upon the mind. Neglecting this fundamental fact, we have remained slaves to sense, when in reality life is so largely mental that every moment of existence is infected and overpowered by thought. It is well, then, to give special prominence to the leading results of our brief study: the fact that all experience is primarily conscious; that this experience is one whole out of which subject and object, feeling, thought, and will are progressively developed; that mind and the outer world are inner and outer aspects of the same experience; and that one self, one permanent individual, persists through all the changes of this twofold series, everywhere looking beyond itself to the infinite Self, whose organized being is at once the basis of all that we are and of all that we desire.

The centre of self-consciousness, then, so far as this deepest heart or essence may be suggested by our imperfect speech, is will, purpose, intent, the love of God fixed on some high ideal to be achieved through our life as a whole. Around this organized centre of conscious experience the strangest paradoxes of joy and suffering, of victory and defeat, of faith and doubt, are

gathered into a single personality, thus presenting to the consciousness of every living soul a solution of life's greatest mystery. He who runs may read, yet the lesson is so simple that we blunder long ere we learn it. No man can tell another all that he perceives there in the secret place of the heart where one is caught up into the heaven of the larger Self. But the conviction grows with years, and the joy deepens with every fresh experience that the Father really knows us in these rare moments as a needed part of his own life. Self-consciousness at its best is thus self-recognition of the Absolute. It is the finite and infinite made momentarily one. It is the soul's solution of the great question which is next to engage our attention, — the discovery of the ultimate Reality toward which experience points through all the avenues of feeling and thought.

III.

THE BASIS OF BELIEF IN A SPIRITUAL REALITY.*

"There is but one thing needful,—to possess God." *Amiel's Journal.*

EIGHTEEN hundred years ago a voice was heard in the far-off East enunciating, simply, clearly, and fearlessly, the law of the higher life, and uttering words of wisdom and comfort which have rarely, if ever, been equalled in wealth of meaning and power. These utterances, freighted with the life of Him who spoke them, summed up the results of ages of contemplation and devotion in the Orient. They represent to-day the wisdom and experience for which the East at its best has stood since that far distant time when its sages first sought to give expression to the real and eternal. God is Spirit, said that voice, a living, omnipresent Father, in whose mansions of power and goodness there is a place for every one; and, if one seek his kingdom and his righteousness through love and service, all else shall be added as the result of natural, immutable law.

Side by side with this great doctrine of an im-

* A paper read before the Metaphysical Club of Boston, January, 1896.

manent Spirit or divine Father, "he whom the mind alone can perceive," has grown up the great intellectual movement which, originating in Greek speculation, has become our modern philosophy and nineteenth-century science with its wondrous achievements. Its one great aim has been to discover the ultimate, self-subsistent, absolute, and eternal reality, as opposed to the ever-changing, the varied finite and relative beings and things which perennially spring from this ultimate unity. It has been greatly hampered at times by the older doctrine, which, neglecting the spiritual simplicity of Jesus' teaching and assuming to know the whole truth, has become conservative, even worldly and hostile. It has won freedom of speech and investigation only by calmly working amidst the greatest opposition, until to-day the sway of physical science and of supposed atheistical philosophy is such that many are questioning whether the older doctrine can survive the doubt, the endless questioning and scrutiny, to which every influential idea is now subjected. Faith and reason, spirit and intellect, have met for their last contest. Never have the claims of intellect been more urgently sustained than they are to-day. Never has scepticism seemed more plausible. On the other hand, the age looks toward a higher or spiritual life with unexampled vigor and enthusi-

asm, not to be put off with the cold formulas of a psychology without a soul. We are searching for proofs of continued existence. We are prying into the occult and unknown, turning once more to the Orient in search of its profoundest wisdom. It is evident that no theory of the universe will suffice which does not somehow find a place for all that is most sacred in human belief and at the same time most valid for human reason. Since all truth is one, whether perceived by an Oriental mystic wrapped in contemplation or insisted upon by the dispassionate reason of a Western philosopher, there can be no ultimate conflict. There must be some criterion, some instinct for truth, — free, spiritual, universal, — an insight broad and deep enough to compass the great doctrines emphasized by reason and the spiritual sense, and comprehensive enough to include all that is vitally persistent in the great common-sense, intellectual, moral, and spiritual philosophies of the world.

Is it too early to discover whither this great unifying tendency is carrying the best thought of our time? Is the voice of firm conviction no longer to be heard? Is there any remaining basis of belief in a divine or spiritual reality which shall withstand the onslaught of the keenest doubt, yet prove acceptable to the sanest intuition?

If such a foundation of belief exists, it surely is not faith alone; for mere faith is often a confession of ignorance, nor mere intellect, since pure logic is proverbially cold and barren. We must, then, give both feeling and thought, intuition and reason, their proper place, and study them as they grow up together, doubting, testing, proving each, never wholly neglecting the one for the other, and ever asking ourselves afresh: What is the real essence, the deepest soul of things? What do we mean by reality?

I ask you, then, to call to mind all that seems to you most vitally real, your most certain convictions, your most troublesome doubts, and your deepest aspirations, and then consider with me how these conflicting interests have developed step by step, first in their rational aspect, in the light of modern science and as related to agnosticism, and then their spiritual culmination in the higher self.

1. One of the first experiences of human life is a sense of keen disappointment. The infant awakens to consciousness in the presence of a great world of pleasing objects apparently spread out upon a flat surface before it. It stretches forth its tiny hands to grasp them only to find that some objects recede far beyond all reach, while others are painfully near. It is made sternly

aware that the strange world into which it has awakened will neither adjust itself to its baby ideas of space nor to its autocratic, grasping volition. Its rapidly quickening consciousness can feel and interpret the world; but, alas! it cannot mould it. The child is surprised, thwarted, suppressed, grieved, until it gradually learns to distinguish its rainbows of fancy, which can never be found in actual, present life, from the world of direct or immediate experience which is the same day after day. Little by little it learns the great lesson that what we really seek is not here, it is ever beyond. Dream leads to dream, and disappointment gives place to glad surprise, only to arouse new desires alluring the thought ever onward to greater achievement.

> "The flower that smiles to-day
> To-morrow dies;
> All that we wish to stay
> Tempts, and then flies."

"Wait until mature life comes," we say, "then you shall know what reality is." Life is real, life is earnest, love is real. Suffering, evil, strife, and struggle for the bare necessities of existence, — these are the realities of life; and childhood's dreams are to give place to a picture of the world painted in the hard-and-fast colors of character. And thus the truth-seeker is driven

from this fact to that, only to be told that reality lies not here: it lies somewhere far beyond.

What is more pathetic, what is more impressive in life than this well-nigh endless search for something stable amidst a world of fleeting and alluring shows, — as youth gives place to manhood, manhood to old age, with its thoughts of a future life, — as one tastes of the so-called pleasures of life, as one enters society, reads the world's great books, and visits foreign lands, nowhere finding what one expects, yet everywhere gathering fragments of a hidden reality behind this great wealth of illusion ?

From the first quickening of thought the mind is in possession of an ever-changing succession of impressions, of awe-inspiring pictures of the flux and variety of natural phenomena. The seasons give place to each other in regular sequence, yet are never quite the same. Human beings, wherever found, possess the same general characteristics; and even among primitive peoples the same tendency to deify the forces supposed to preside over this incessant change is everywhere observable. Yet no two people are wholly alike, no two years bring the same joys and sorrows. The disappointments, the aspirations, the heart-aches, and struggles of one's friend or neighbor may be as unknown as the experience of the most distant member of the human family.

Sudden grief or fortune may reveal unsuspected traits of character, unsparing and self-denying devotion in those nearest and dearest us, thereby proving how shallow was our supposed insight and friendship. Nature offers the strongest reason for believing that she is ever uniform. Yet she treats us to countless surprises, and we can only trust that no serious change will ever break the harmony of physical events as we now know them. The "eternal hills" are not eternal at all, but are the results of the gradual upheaving and sinking of the earth's crust, modified by a thousand incidental, ever-active causes. The densest rock-masses and the great structures reared by man may be transformed in an incredibly short time into the gases or elementary substances from which they were slowly evolved.

History, language, art, science, — nearly everything that forms the object of human knowledge, — is subject to change. Man, the interpreter, and the world he interprets, are in a thousand respects unstable, fleeting, illusory. Man appears on the scene of the world-play for a time, freighted with the prejudices, the beliefs, and inclinations of his ancestors, and enthused by more ambitions and dreams of success than are destined ever to be realized. Environment, mental and physical, desire, ambition, temperament, the influence of other minds and of educa-

tional and business interests, vie with each other to mould him and his thought-world in their peculiar fashion. In a profound sense, as we have seen, the world even for the artist, the poet, and the highly cultivated men of science, who give their lives to the one great task of drawing near the heart of nature, — even for them the world is individual, personal, colored by their leading interests and those aspects of life to which fate has rendered them receptive.

It is clear, then, that the mere given or immediate experience is not the ultimate reality we seek, although it is assuredly an aspect of it. Reality is not so easily found as this. When asked, What is reality? it is futile to reply, "Why, the world is just the world: if you wish to know what reality is, strike yonder wall, live, labor, suffer, enjoy, and know that the self which thus encounters reality is itself real." For, although this is in a sense real, and the world of feeling, of finite self, and its unsatisfied longings most certainly and surely existent, yet such an appeal to experience simply means what one person has seen, suffered, enjoyed, and hoped for: it gives no criterion of reality. To know what this endless spectacle of change signifies, to know how far your world and mine are identical, we must first understand ourselves in relation to the world, and seek out that ultimate Being which is the sufficient condition of all that exists.

2. Nor is the case much better when we turn from the world of every-day thought to the more exact realm of physical science. Surely, no product of human intelligence seems more thorough, convincing, and accurate. Up to a certain point science is virtually unanswerable. It offers the only plausible description of nature ever given. The theory of evolution, the law of the persistence of force and substance, the universality of law, and the grand world-picture painted by geology, biology, and the other special sciences, showing how all existing forms of life have been slowly developed through never-ceasing combination and recombination of elementary substances or atoms,— who would think of disputing these grand results as long as they are confined to their special field?

But what of the higher nature of man, with its rational, moral, and spiritual tendencies, the unity of self-consciousness and the wide range of phenomena made known on a higher plane than physical sense? What if space and time should prove to be appearances? How came the atoms to assume these wonderful shapes in conformity to exact law? What holds the universe together, giving it unity, system, life, purpose, an ultimate and self-subsistent basis? What, in the last analysis, is the persistent force or motion on which science insists, when driven to the last stronghold?

For these questions physical science has no satisfactory answer. In fact, science is built upon postulates, and is everywhere face to face with a so-called insoluble problem. Neither force nor substance alone, nor both together, can give ultimate reality. Materialism is not and should never claim to be thorough-going philosophy, and the only danger from it lies in uncritically assuming it to be in some sense final. It is not final in any respect. It has no valid reason for assuming that only the physical order of nature exists. It has no rational way of dealing with its own postulates; and, so far as it rightfully insists upon the hard-and-fast realities of our physical life, all this can be dealt with consistently only by that higher branch of knowledge which alone offers a criterion of reality.

In order to make this perfectly clear, recall for a moment the foregoing description of the first experiences of life, or ask yourself what you mean by the word "thing," by yonder wall, chair, table. You mean, I suspect, that the object has certain spatial qualities, or extension, hardness, resistance. All this, we have seen, is known only in relation to a physical organism, in proportion as it is translated into consciousness and observed by a thinking subject. We have no ground, then, for affirming that these material objects, our organisms, nor even our own per-

cipient selves, are absolutely and independently real; since we know them only as parts of a two-fold experience whose unity must be sought in a fundamental reality.

Which element of your experience are you willing to surrender, — physical feeling by which you perceive an outer world, your ideas about the world, or the self that contemplates both the world and its ideas about it? You will not surrender one of them; and how can you keep them if either materialism or solipsism* is true? If you retain them all, — the great law-governed world of nature with its wonderful variety of forces and substances, the ever-changing world of human thought and emotion, and the world of finite selves, — their unity, their cause and ground, the basis of good and evil, of truth and error, the great "other" which is our eternal object of thought, must be sought elsewhere.

Accordingly, science beats a retreat upon the Unknowable. All these diversities of matter and motion, so we are told, are the manifestations of some hidden Power that is absolutely unknowable. To the realm of this inscrutable Power we must, then, turn there to encounter a far more formidable antagonist than materialism.

3. The argument for the Unknowable, or

*See p. 48.

Thing-in-itself, is briefly somewhat as follows: In addition to our general finitude, which necessarily makes experience a world of narrow limitations for every human being, there is, as we have seen, a long array of facts to show that the world, as I represent it, is unique, — that a different world exists for each observer. Even my time and my space, with their included determinations, are different from yours. I perceive everything imperfectly which my limited experience makes it possible for me to perceive at all, seizing upon such relations as my temperament, the associations and conditions into which I was born, and my transient interests lead me to emphasize. There is an element in every fundamental problem which eludes the subtlest scrutiny, the precise point, it may be, essential to its complete solution, the knowledge of which might transform the entire problem. Only an infinite Thing-in-itself could grasp all these relations in one simultaneous cognition, and therefore know things as they really are.

My reason declares certain conclusions to be true which your faith and experience will not let you accept. I have no right to impose my representation of the world and my temperamental conditions upon you, nor even my conception of reality. In so far as our representations and experiences differ, they are clearly not reality; and

I am not sure that they coincide at all. I am therefore forced to conclude that my finite self, with all its particular determinations, is appearance, or illusion. I simply know my own states of consciousness; and they are finite, known by a finite self, and never transcended. How *could* a finite self ever know anything about the life and possibilities of the infinite? I am confident that I can know nothing, either directly or indirectly, about the universe as it exists apart from my consciousness; for how could self-conscious appearance, perceiving the world-show, thereby learn anything concerning that which only appears? All I can consistently say is this: some inscrutable Power exists, for something persistently appears or represents itself to me. Concerning its nature I can say absolutely nothing that is not self-contradictory. No possible term of human speech can describe it. The contrast is indescribably absolute. The Thing-in-itself is utterly and forever removed from finite experience and finite thought. It is Unknowable, Ineffable, the great Peace, the great End, where all questions would be answered, could we by some bare impossibility transcend our finitude and be there.

Such is the process by which I put the Power or Essence of life utterly and forever beyond me, shutting myself into the narrow prison of my own

finitude. But I ask you to note carefully that the Power, which I have thus put away, is happily the *non-existent:* it is a fiction of speculative thought. If I could show that I am ten times removed from direct contact with reality, it would not follow that reality is the Unknowable; and, the more acute the analysis of my ignorance, the more positive would be the basis of belief that I know something definite about ultimate Being. If God *were* utterly removed from the world, how could we even know that he exists off there alone and unknowable? Or, if one admitted the absolute contrast, how could one prove it, unless one were infinite, therefore comprehending all the reasons for affirming the contrast? Is it not assuming omniscience to affirm that reality is the Unknowable? If knowledge of the absolute x, or Power behind phenomena, were utterly impossible, then no sentence in any language would contain the slightest intimation of genuine truth. Therefore, the conclusion that there is an Unknowable would be utterly false and illogical. If there were an Unknowable, we could not know it; and, so far as we possess any wisdom at all, we know that the Inscrutable does not exist. Finally, no absolute x, or unknowable Thing-in-itself, could be far off there, utterly apart from our world and our consciousness, since without possessing our world, our

thought, all that exists or ever could exist or be thought, as a part of itself, this Power would not be absolute.

Yet this doctrine of the Unknowable has taken a firm hold on the thought of our time. It is important, then, to note that the entire doctrine is, in deepest truth, a positive basis of belief in an ultimate knowable, present, living reality. He who is wise in his own conceit will tell you confidently what God is, what life is; while the truly wise man speaks very cautiously, well knowing that only God himself could fully know all the relations of the simplest fact. It is Huxley, or some other eminent man of science who has studied nature all his life, who hesitates to say what life is; while he who is not wise enough to be an agnostic enthusiastically expounds the secrets of life. But the agnostic himself falls into a worse difficulty unless he sees that, in learning the limitations of finite life, he is at the same time advancing step by step toward positive insight into that deep-lying reality in whose being and love we abide. How could the philosopher describe the infinite self-cognition of the Absolute as opposed to our own imperfect thinking unless he beheld that relationship with unusual clearness? Granted that reality is in the profoundest sense unknown, and as a whole far transcends our experience, on the other hand,

what is so well known, what else forms an object of thought, by what else do we live? Why do we feel that God is more than pantheism, more than any system of thought would imply? Why do we distrust any account of him, however ideal, unless we already *know* him in our heart of hearts to be infinitely grander and more real? And what experience, what attempt to grasp the divine, is in the end more convincing and impressive than this precise discovery that every account of him is inadequate?

Surely, the profoundest sceptic is the most logical, the sanest, wisest of men, if haply he understand the significance of his doubts. The permanent basis of scepticism, as it is developed in the history of thought, is the one ineradicable ground of belief in an ultimate reality. That which in my profoundest and calmest moment of doubt I cannot seriously question is the only foundation of positive belief. It is the old experience of self-consciousness again, — the finite self discovering by contrast the great Self, the great Spirit underlying phenomena, without which the selves and their phenomena could not be. He alone knows the Father to be literally the All who has given thought the utmost opportunity to doubt him, only to find that the mind is begirt on all sides by that which it would deny. Sound human ignorance to its ultimate

depth, fearlessly, patiently, persistently, and you shall find that every item of doubt is at the same time an inexpressibly wealthy source of profound conviction: until the giant scepticism has been met and mastered in his own realm the human spirit has no genuine peace.

Why, then, should we look beyond the universe for an utterly lonely Creator, a God whom no one can know, or a Thing-in-itself existing far off there in absolute solitude? Spencer's Unknowable could never have originated our experience, nor is the world explained by postulating Kant's Thing-in-itself. Whatever exists, whatever we think and feel, belongs to the true Absolute. God is always here, or not at all; and experience is constantly teaching us more and more, guiding the thought deeper and deeper into the heart of things, until at last one really learns what it is to *believe*, in that deepest moment of doubt when agnosticism itself is transmuted into positive conviction. And, if you already know something positive concerning experience and its inevitable conditions, "you surely cannot argue from this that no experience can give any true wisdom." *

Starting with the obvious fact that man must have some innate capacity to perceive the world in order to be aware of it at all, we have seen

* Royce, "The Conception of God," p. 18.

that whatever he knows or perceives externally has some ground or correspondence within him. Whatever he accomplishes is in part the outgrowth and development of this innate capacity. Whatever he persistently hopes for or desires dwells by nature within him. Spencer, philosophizing, already possesses his misnamed Unknowable. Even the possible is also in part the real. No mind is utterly deceived, no error is absolute, no thought, no fancy, however wild, is without some reference to reality, some basis in actual experience. Psychology furnishes striking confirmation of this by showing that imagination is never purely creative. All thinking starts with experience, and is itself a form of experience. The most absurd vagary is a partial content of experience, abstracted from the great Whole which is the sum total of all that actually exists.

It is clear, then, that an immediately present reality exists, equal to the task of originating our universe, the sufficient ground of all differences, of all forces, causes, qualities, and relations, corresponding in a measure to experience in its threefold sense of feeling, thought, and will, and uniting within itself law, fate, freedom, the apparent inconsistencies of evil and suffering, the varied world of nature and the world of finite consciousness, of hope, of strug-

gle for immortality and for perfect wisdom. Whence came the universe, how came we by these unquenched longings, this restless search for truth, beauty, and virtue, this belief in a God, or Spirit, this rational demand for an ultimate ground of things, unless there is a deep unfathomed Self within, a fundamental Reality which already possesses this limitless experience of nature, of the social organism, and of self-consciousness in its completion? And, if this deeper Self within is identical with the Reality, or Life, which underlies all being without, must we not, then, enlarge our consciousness until it shall include the All in all, the eternal Beauty, and the immanent Father, knowing us as a part of himself, in one great living realization of his presence? Here, then, in the eternal realm behind all appearances or manifestations, is the Being whose life includes the varied experiences of our first discussion and the fleeting self of Chapter II. This is the real "other" which completes all feeling, thought, and will, the real object of pursuit in all human existence, the One whose wondrous world of the Many completes its total self in the Perfect Whole.

Surely, the existence of God cannot be demonstrated if he is the Whole, the ground and content of all demonstration, of all thought, even when we try to put him far from us as the Un-

knowable. The attempt to prove the existence of God would be like endeavoring to prove that number exists by the use of certain numerals, whereas number is used in every possible demonstration: we show its existence by using it. "You cannot prove the existence of a Deity by any reasoning process, for there may be nothing in a logical conclusion which was not in the premises; and, if God be in your premises, you have begged the question. If he be not in your premises, he will not be logically found in your conclusion." *

One fact of paramount importance, then, offsets all that science or any logician can say in regard to proved knowledge. The chief possessions of human intelligence, — the idea of God, the fact that we exist in a world of thoughts and feelings referring to a will or purpose lying beyond them, and the fact that we possess hopes for the future, — these ideas are incapable of demonstration: we must start with them, we can hope only at best to understand how we came to recognize their ultimate validity. Reality simply *is*, at once its own reason for being and the basis of all accounts, all theories, all recognition of it. Directly or indirectly, we know nothing else, we feel nothing else, we *are* nothing else; and reality eludes us only when we set over

* Van Norden, "The Psychic Factor," p. 204.

against it some aspect or part of it as though it were independently real. It is the all-inclusive One, the "self-consistent," harmonious Unity, or Individual, embracing in a "single system" all diversity, all appearance, all thought and feeling, goodness, beauty, and truth.* We never think more profoundly than when we turn to it as the one ultimate ground of all that exists, itself all that manifests and knows it, the sublime Whole of which it is a joy to be a part.

Reason, pushed to its utmost limits in the profoundest moments of scepticism, thus assures us of the existence of an ultimate reality whose wisdom, although far transcending our own, yet includes it, leaving no room for absolute doubt. We have stopped once more with that which *knows us* in these most important moments of consciousness. We shall now see that our higher nature not only confirms this conclusion, but shows us that this reality is ultimately spiritual.

4. Sometimes, in a moment of unusual stillness, one rises wholly above the earthly or personal self to the eternal, causeless, and spaceless realm where infinite peace abides. One can hardly tell how the experience begins. All descriptions of it and of what one perceives there seem utterly

*F. H. Bradley, "Appearance and Reality," London: Swan, Sonnenschein & Co., chap. xiii., a profound but somewhat negative and highly technical treatise, to which I am much indebted.

inadequate, cold, and prosaic. Yet no moment of life seems more real than this, none so near the soul-life or dreamless experience which we sometimes feel is to be ours in the future; and no experience leaves a more lasting impression. For one is no longer the mere finite self seeking to fit incongruous and fugitive facts into the mosaic of rational truth. These rare moments seldom come when they are voluntarily sought. But a Somewhat seeks us, something ineffable draws the attention away from the cares and limitations of finite life for a few moments of calmest rest in intimate nearness to the Life of infinite wisdom and perfect love.

It is then that one has some sense of life's meaning as a well-ordered whole, just as one surveys a fair landscape from some commanding mountain height, looking far beyond the narrow vales of doubt and of despair. One sees the beauty of the whole just because the landscape possesses its varied configurations, — just because man is given every chance to doubt, to sin, to defeat the moral and spiritual purposes for which he was born, instead of having everything made smooth, with all power and wisdom at his command. One believes it inevitable that there should be but one ultimate energy, one grand moral ideal, slowly realized, one final wisdom, love, and goodness; for one sees the tendency of

all facts, of all lives, all purposes, to refer to and be completed in the Life which knows neither beginning nor ending, the great infrangible Whole where the finite will is essential to the will of infinite love.

One seems to penetrate to the very heart or centre of this deepest Essence, or Spirit, besides which nothing exists, to perceive at least imperfectly its life, its meaning, its purpose, both in its transcendent and in its manifested sense as the realizing energy of our world. One understands that, unless there were just such an endlessly varied universe, with its paradoxes of sin and suffering, and the perpetual flow of events which on the human side seem so mysterious, thus bringing ever-varied aspects of the Self before its all-comprehending thought as objects of its unfailing devotion, its life would not be absolute. The wisdom or beauty of everything just as it is, in this completed sense, is thus brought vividly before the mind. In this one brief glance behind the dream of physical life a flood of light and meaning is thrown upon the troublesome problems of our finitude. Thereafter, one foresees, all descriptions of life will seem short-sighted and mean which do not thus view things in the light of their origin, development, and outcome as related to the life and meaning of the Whole.

Happily, too, one's own life seems fitted into

this great fabric of divine self-manifestation. It is not lost, it does not lose its character, but feels itself assigned to its due place. The thought penetrates at will through the boundlessness of eternity, where all is free, calm, harmonious, and where the finite dwells with the infinite in a closeness of sympathy which words can barely suggest. For here, on the one hand, is that Self whom no words can adequately name, whom no thought can grasp, whom no life, no world, no universe, seems wholly to reveal, who is no less, but infinitely more, than we mean by the words person, universe, mind, beauty, power, goodness, Spirit, God, Father, or any term that has been rightfully applied to him in the past. Yet, on the other hand, the finite self is still there, one with, but not identical with, the ineffable Spirit, so that in this sublime moment one is apparently — yes, one is deeply and truly — this absolute Self, in part, beholding its well-ordered system of self-manifestation.

What is this living Essence which makes its presence known in moments when we least expect it? The greatest minds of the ages have been illuminated by it. Jesus described his life as one with it. Under various names and in differing descriptions it appeals to us through the profoundest utterances of man. Sometimes in the experiences of utmost despair it is this sustaining

presence which alone carries one through the dark valley of sorrow. Is it not fundamentally, in this most personal sense, a sublime affection, the perfection and essence of purest love?

The essence of life is described by Schopenhauer as "will"; and our study of self-consciousness has shown that will, purpose, or desire, is the centre of all finite experience. But will is a cold word. Love includes will, and vivifies it. It expresses the purpose of life and its warmth as well. Swedenborg defines this divine essence as love and wisdom, the two elements necessary to all completed being. It is surely love that governs all our acts, and makes us cling to life; and our love is good in proportion to the wisdom that guides it. Only love could endear us to God. Only love can be conceived as the ultimate motive for founding a universe. "God is love," the New Testament declares without qualification. Love is, in truth, the very heart of life. He who possesses it to the greatest degree is nearest life's reality. He who sees that it must have its basis in perfect intelligence, and its expression in lesser beings whom it can love and serve, is very near the great mystery which only the varied phenomena of a perfect universe could declare.

But any idea of God is confessedly an abstraction, a content separated by a finite mind from

the great mass of existence and partaking of the character of the one who conceives it. No two ideas of God can be alike, for the reason that no two experiences, no two minds, are alike. The identity, or unity, lies in that which the idea attempted to describe. What we mean by saying that God is Spirit is evidently that profoundest of all truths for which the world's greatest thinkers have ever contended, — namely, that nothing visible or material is final: it is variety, it is appearance, while in contrast to it reality is spiritual, it is a Mind. What we mean by affirming that God is love is that highest manifestation of the living, immanent Spirit which endears us to him personally as the Father, that revelation of reality which we *feel*, in which we trust; and this, so far as we can express it, is the highest finite point of view. But the supreme Being is all this and more, all love and more, all wisdom and more. He is literally the All, the great sum total: nothing else, nothing less, is, in the strictest sense, absolutely real.

Thus understood, the chief value of any idea of God lies in a frank acknowledgment of its limitations, its utter inadequacy. The existence of the higher self, which beholds and comprehends these exalted experiences in their transcendent significance, is the deepest evidence that reality

is spiritual. This consciousness we found already existing in germ in the first experiences of life. It was this self, with its ideals, its moral sense, and its earnest love of truth, which refused to be satisfied either with physical science or with the Unknowable, and found itself already in possession of reality when scepticism yielded up its concealed wisdom. Knowledge of the self in some of its aspects has been our guide and corrective throughout. Of the existence of *some* self every thinking person is sure, whether or not one sees that one may logically proceed from this to the being of an absolute Whole. Concerning this self we know three great facts; namely, that it feels, thinks, and wills. In relation to its perceptions is the organized world lying beyond. Its deepest feelings are included in a self larger and wiser than the self of every-day life. And, finding the higher self existing there with its manifold attributes, we are logically bound to give it its rightful place in our thought, although it prove to be but a manifestation of a spiritual reality lying deeper than its profoundest consciousness.

To many minds the existence of this higher self, in living touch with the Spirit, is the one sure evidence that God exists; and they would no more doubt its deep reality, its guidance, and the realm of possibilities of insight, life, and power

which it reveals, than they would doubt the most persistent evidence for the existence of nature. For its assurance is far more trustworthy than the occasional vision of the mystic or the contradictory reason of the purely intellectual thinker. It is always there. It is a part of one's life, of one's inmost heart, — the transition from the finite to the infinite. It is a continuous idealizing tendency, acting in the same thorough, orderly manner as the evolutionary forces of nature. It is the self that feels pity for humanity, that rises to higher and still higher planes of consciousness through the development of inner calmness and poise, ever ready to guide, to uplift, to inspire, and to strengthen whenever one stills the more personal self, and listens in all humility for its unmistakable emphasis of what is good, of the true and the right.

Thus in whatever direction of thought we turn we are brought face to face with the same elements; namely, a conscious self finding itself existing in a whole which, on the one hand, shades off imperceptibly into the eternal, the unknown, the ineffable, and on the other tends to become the world of finite feeling, thought, and will. Our final conception of reality, then, must be one which, while insisting that these deeper experiences are manifestations of the real rather than the very Essence itself, and declaring all

systems of thought to be inadequate, yet finds a place for them all, and is large enough to include all that is vitally true in the great philosophies and religions of the world, — the verities of sense, of actual life, of feeling, and of reason. Nothing is excluded; but everything apparent is a manifestation, and has its place in ultimate Being. Common sense, physical science, pantheism, agnosticism, and the rest are accepted for what they are fundamentally worth as enrichments of our knowledge of that Power whose depth of beauty and goodness is such that all these revelations of him are needed. Every aspect of reality, even that embodied in our belief in a personal God, or God as the immanent cause and life of our world, looks beyond itself to the deep-lying unity where all manifestations converge in the eternal One, the Perfect Whole.

Let us, then, try to realize together what it means to be thus included in a Whole "whose centre is everywhere, and the circumference nowhere." Since this ineffable Whole of beauty, wisdom, and power is literally the All, there could be no other independent being or reality; for all that exists has its being in that Ultimate beyond which thought can never go. No part is real, self-sufficient, or good in itself, nor completely self-knowing. Man cannot know himself

as he really is, cannot understand the world, a friend, life, until all this has found its eternal setting in the background of the truly real. No thought, no emotion, no longing, no prayer, falls outside the all-inclusive thought, the eternity of love and wisdom toward which we aspire. Such wisdom, goodness, life, power as we possess, is not ours alone: it is ours through the higher self, and we take undue credit to ourselves when we claim independence of insight and power. Since there is and could be but one perfect wisdom, one infinite goodness, and one efficient energy, all finite goodness and activity must be a sharing of this divine power. All qualities, all phenomena, all beings, forces, and worlds, have a common source. Man's desires and sins, human society with all its contrasts and its selfishness, and nature with all its bounties and calamities, have the same ultimate foundation. Not a wail from the poverty-stricken mother, not a curse from the most wretched criminal, not a pulse-beat in any creature that lives, nor the activity of the tiniest atom, can be without an unwordably close and sympathetic relation to that absolute experience which holds all possibilities within its life. It therefore matters little who and what we are, and how we begin to think, if thought at last leads us to this one resistless conclusion that there is and could be but one ultimate reality.

This doctrine is, therefore, the basis of the broadest charity and the greatest tolerance, since not your way of thinking alone, nor mine, nor that of the sect into which we were educated, but all ways, all systems of thought, all aspirations, and all lives, lead to the one central source for all who pursue thought to its ultimate.

Does it seem hard and cruel that this perfect life of the Absolute should need so much sorrow and suffering, or permit so much misery to exist? Then let us remember that we can judge of nothing by itself, that nothing is complete as we know it. We perceive it only in the light of certain relations. We can but dimly see its outcome and meaning. But that the real includes the ideal in the actual process of realization we have found ample evidence in the existence of the higher self. Who understands another well enough to judge him? Who can tell the meaning of events in this unfinished stage of society, where the majority of people are still selfish and unreasoning? Who shall say that in the light of the whole, which alone gives reality, there is not some rich compensation for all that is heart-rending and sinful? Who shall say that the divine experience is not the richer and the more beautiful just because of this infinite variety of finite life with all its sins and its shortcomings? Are you willing to condemn the world on the

basis of your scant wisdom — before you learn the meaning of life in its ultimate sense?

All suffering seems baneful while we are in its throes. All ignorance seems bliss until we learn that without contest, without contrast, without relative evil, there can be no genuine wisdom and no absolute good. Then we learn to fall back on the higher self, awaiting its guidance, taking whatever it brings, and dealing with it patiently, justly, and thoughtfully.

Furthermore, each man is, by virtue of his existence, a part of the eternal Whole, and possesses rights of which no one may justly deprive him. Any system of philosophy which separates him from his native environment, wherein all wisdom, all love, and goodness are his to the degree that he is able to receive them, any legislation, any social custom, any political or religious doctrine which deprives him of his rights, is illogical and unethical. Man belongs to the world, to the universe, and to God. So much of the world belongs to man as is essential to his freedom, his welfare and education. So much of the universe is his as he can contemplate and understand. So much of God as he needs to help him on his way, while in no measure depriving him of that strength and character which experience alone can give, is his by right of birth. The finite inheres in the infinite, man dwells in God; and,

when society shall recognize this ethical and spiritual relation to the great All, there will be a wonderful change in human conduct and thought.

But how often we forget that all this depends on what we *are*, on character and self-knowledge! How often we mistake the abstract for the concrete, and suppose that the ideal which we grasp in an ecstasy of timeless intuition is very soon to be fulfilled, and ought immediately to be realized in the space and time world of to-day! How often we forget that there must be evolution! Forever the perfect reality is made known in two aspects: as the inexpressibly great and beautiful life of absolute goodness and love, eternal and unchangeable; and as the universe of ever-changing manifestation wrought to its completion by measured reflection and far-seeing adaptation of means to ends. Slowly, patiently, but surely, thoroughly, and with an eternal fitness, a beauty of design and organization which have been the wonder of man ever since human thinking began, our world is nearing its completion as an organic part of a great stellar and planetary system. Slowly and with infinite care the complex organism of human society is learning its lesson, guided by forces which we see not, moving toward ends which are lost in an ideal future, and in every part, in every soul, in every struggling life, with you and with me, inspired, guided, and sus-

tained by that Spirit which nothing can separate from us or from the world, since there is naught beside.

Does it invalidate our conclusion that we cannot explain all this in detail, because we cannot assign an adequate reason for existence? Is it not far more reasonable to affirm that finite and infinite must always have existed together, at once giving up all attempts to conceive of a beginning or ultimate origin of manifestation? If there is but one last reality, there could be but one possible total universe, while there may be infinite variety or difference in worlds and their inhabitants. Reality is never more nor less than itself. Appearance or manifestation is not something added to it. No relations among its worlds and finite beings can be new to omniscience. Nothing could have an absolute beginning. The universe of manifestation is eternal, — actually or potentially. Why its phenomena exist, and why we are what we truly are, only the complete self-cognizing reality itself could ever know. We know in part. Certain unsolved problems are sure to haunt us to the end. It does not, however, follow that they are insoluble. Because God in the absolute sense dwells afar from us, — so far that we can perceive but a gleam of light from his radiant glory, — it does not follow that we may not know him in part, feel him in part,

be guided by him in part, as truly as we enjoy our share of the sun's warmth and light, every ray of which is unmistakably due to the one central luminary. And, if his beauty and goodness is mediated to us, it is not because he is distant from us in space, like the sun, but because we can only receive a part of that which in its fulness is eternally here: God himself mediates his wisdom to us.

The inmost self which knows this great fact in its deep significance is, I repeat, the safest clew to the nature and existence of God. To be sure, one still has doubts and longings, since one is thus made most consciously aware of one's limitations. But reality as thus manifested is at least a living, a conscious, sympathetic reality, and not an abstraction, cold and formal. It is unmistakably spiritual, making itself known in consciousness rather as the seeker, the knower, the possessor, than as a somewhat which comes at our bidding; and one can only say at last, in undoubting humility and awe: Peace, peace! God is here, let me know him, let me feel him in the depth and beauty of the eternal now.

Is not this the beginning of the Christ-consciousness, that self which dwells so near reality, so near the Divine Being, that it says, "Not my will, but thine, be done," which takes no thought for the future, never considers itself, but ever

loves and serves, that it may be purer, truer, nobler, — the passing of the human into the divine? Here, at any rate, is the highest level we can now reach, where the finite soul no longer regards itself as the source of its best thoughts and its wisest deeds, where the soul could not doubt if it would, since it is in the moment of complete self-renunciation, perhaps of utter despair and weakness, that God at last makes himself really known. Thus in the moment of the profoundest agony, it may be, when the soul cries out in despair, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" as in the moment of the sincerest scepticism and in the sublimest vision of the mystic, there is an assurance born of infinite wisdom and power, before which human will, human doubt, is powerless. The finite will in its utmost extremity confesses its weakness, losing itself to find itself again transfigured in the glory of the infinite. This it is to know God, to be known and loved by him; to know reality as opposed to the shows of life, and in that one transcendent moment to win that peace, that conviction, that strength, which nothing can ever take away.

IV.

MYSTICISM.

"Dark is the world to thee:
Thyself art the reason why."

Tennyson.

One general result now emerges from the foregoing chapters. Whether we consider life from the point of view of experience, of self-consciousness, or as the manifestation of an invisible Being, existence proves to be manifold, contradictory, illusive, when viewed from without, and fundamentally a harmony when viewed from within. Every moment of life, as it passes, presents the same elements which face us in the universe at large; and every moment, when understood, is a solution of life's total mystery. We learn of the existence of ourselves through the discovery that other beings exist, and we know of the existence of the outer world only in its relation to or contrast with our own changing finite consciousness. On the other hand, these opposed relationships could not exist unless there were an ultimate reality, or Being, persisting through all these changes of substance and force. Spirit, the Self, God, is undeniably one.

Only the Whole is self-consistent, only the All is absolutely real, — permanent in all its manifestations and complete through all its parts and through us. Faith and reason both confessed their inability to carry us further than this when, in that ultimate moment of human doubt, the eternal Spirit itself illumined the finite in its utter helplessness. Our conclusion, then, is that in the Spirit or Whole, where the finite recognizes its kinship with the Father in every humblest fact of life, as well as in the profoundest reaches of thought and the sublimest uplifts of the spiritual sense, — a harmony too great for human thought to define, — true unity is alone to be found.

The first and inevitable result among a certain class of minds possessing spiritual insight to any marked degree is to miss the whole point of this conclusion, and to declare that, since the unity of things is to be found only in Spirit, this immediate whole of ecstatic vision is the sole reality, while the intellect, just because it conceives the world as a paradox, is incapable of discovering any genuine truth. Any doctrine or theory of life can be supported by reason, so the disciple of the immediate vision declares, and argument convinces no one. The true unity of things is to be found only through contemplation and absorption, never by analytical thinking. It is the

spirit or essence of truth that comes to us by direct insight, not we to the truth. All else is merely superfluous if one perceives this Spirit. One must love, one must *be* the Spirit, one must still the personal self, and await the truth in isolated silence; for in its own mysterious way the true light shines upon us when it meets no obstacle within.

Here many would prefer to abide in peace and love. Since there is but one love and wisdom, it seems far better to realize its eternal presence than to engage in controversy. Mere intellectual criticism is confessedly incapable of discovering such a deep harmony as this, where only spirit and love may enter. The chief difference between one thorough-going system of thought and another is, after all, a matter of terminology: all sincere truth-lovers *mean* the same great truth. Seeming differences are greatly magnified in polemics, thereby furnishing a fit object for the exercise of intellectual pride. But this avails nothing. One is even inclined to believe that those who describe the universe in material terms are really contemplating the same events from the opposite angle of vision, which the seer declares to be spiritual. The object of all philosophical inquiry is the same. What we mean all the time is what we are, and what we are only our immediate Self could tell us; for we are that Self.

Granting the relative truth of this position, what becomes of the world of space and time, with its aggressive problems, its needy, struggling inhabitants, the demands of our rational and moral natures, and the great results of intellectual thinking? Mystical contemplation might suffice if there were no world to explain. But, when the mystic turns to that, he declares that there is no outer world, no evil, and no evolution, what seems to be our fair world of nature being mere *maya*, or illusion. All is God, and God is All. There is, in fact, no individual man. The abstract point of view is, therefore, the only true one. All distinctions between the infinite and the finite, between eternity and time, higher and lower, are effaced, and ecstatic intuition alone remains as the true experience. The one safeguard of all thinking — discrimination — is abandoned, and for the mystic the only occupation left is the enjoyment in peaceful contemplation of the one glorious Spirit thus clearly and eternally made known.

Shall we accept all this, all that is objectionable in pantheism, with its unconscious God, whom no one would worship, its denial of personality and responsibility, and its bare characterless infinitude? All this is implied in the mystic's position. In order to guard against it, then, we must briefly, yet sympathetically and

with a sense that we are here treading on holy ground, point out the inconsistencies of this doctrine. There is, perhaps, no better way than this to show precisely what we do mean by our conclusion; and there is surely no consideration that will throw more light upon the right use of the spiritual sense and the problems of evil and error.

Plotinus, the father of Western mysticism, says, "The mind that wishes to behold God must itself become God." Self-consciousness must be transcended, reason silenced, self-activity renounced, and all thought must give place to the mystical ecstasy; for thought is a desire to know, and in the ecstasy there is no desire. Mysticism has therefore been defined as "the belief that God may be known face to face, without anything intermediate." The most consistent mystics therefore unqualifiedly say, "I am God, you are God, all is God."

In those rare moments when, in quiet restfulness and contemplation, the soul turns aside from the world of shows to the great unfathomable world within, in the wonderful timeless vision when one grasps all things at once, the illusions of finite life and the world vanish, the dream is over, and the soul thus absorbed in the Spirit recognizes itself, and exclaims wherever the

thought is turned, "That art Thou." This state of ecstatic transport, in which we lose ourselves, is, in deepest truth, a return to ourselves. Individual finite existence fades away in the light of the divine glory. The soul no longer looks beyond itself for truth, light, and power. It beholds *within* itself the fulness and totality of being, the everlasting, the perfect, the self-existent. Subject and object have ceased to exist. Contrast, struggle, nature, and limitation are naught. The soul does not simply *know*, for all knowledge is contradictory and delusive. It perceives, it *is*, it absorbs, it is absorbed through immediate, sacred, unwordable, and eternal self-recognition.

Again, one hesitates to comment on such an experience as this, surely sublime and in the highest degree spiritual. Yet it is explicitly an experience, and of the well-known type which we have defined as immediate or primary. Moreover, it is an experience *of* something, and as such needs to be reflectively interpreted; for it cannot be converted, so that we can say of it, "This is the Perfect Whole." Experience as we know it would have to be transcended to attain this; and surely no person is, nor ever could be, the limitless and eternal Reality which all manifestations alike in the world of nature and in the world of mind reveal. In fact, the

mystical transport of itself gives no immediate and unquestionable certainty; for there is no assurance, until one doubts, that one is not merely contemplating one's self, or some imagined Absolute, instead of the pure being of love and wisdom whom we call God. The mystic in accepting his transport as genuine, therefore, does so for *reasons*, — because he believes all reasoning to be vain. This in itself is a flat contradiction of his whole theory that the intellect is "the language of contradiction"; for this is an intellectual conclusion arrived at by a process of rapid reasoning.

Then, too, experience, as we have noted, is far more a life of intelligent *thought* than of mere feeling, which, in the last analysis, is what the mystical transport claims to be. Only in infancy is our experience simple sensation; and as outlines emerge from the blurred whole in which we learn to distinguish time, space, causation, the relationship of objects, beings, and things, the existence of selves, feelings of pain and pleasure, all this — together with our conceptions of God, the world, of past and present, hope and defeat, duty and sin — is a development, a secondary experience or interpretation of the presented mass of feeling. Years of thought alone suffice to show how largely experience is made up of ideal constructions. We

do not feel the world, the self, God as a whole, in one moment of time. The world as understood by men is presented only in thought. How all this might appear if illusion should utterly vanish we cannot now say; for, in order fully to know, we should have to *be* not only all that we feel, but understand all that we have thought, since no wisdom would satisfy us which failed to tell us what we have *meant* all along.

In the last analysis, then, we are forced to admit our finitude, and to confess that we are still considering life from the human point of view. The mystical experience does not assume its true place in our thinking until we carefully discriminate between what we actually *feel* and what we merely *think* about our ecstasy. For feeling and thought, inseparable at the start, have grown old together. Even in the state of illumination, reality is not a simple immediate and uninterpreted whole. Into such an experience, however sublime, enters unconsciously and necessarily all that the mystic has previously thought and experienced, all that he tries to suppress when he enters the silence, all that he *is*. All so-called revelation is commensurate with the character of its recipient: it is never infallible. It is therefore "far nobler to comprehend than merely to perceive." Not he who merely thinks or reasons about life, not he who

is occasionally illumined, but he who both lives and reasons, patiently comparing vision with vision and philosophy with philosophy, thereby discovering why all systems are inadequate, yet partly true, — that man only who persistently asks himself what and why he believes and what his visions *mean* is in possession of trustworthy wisdom or truth.

Illumination is like the pure white ray of light, while reason is the prism which decomposes it into its constituent colors. Mysticism, absorbed in contemplation of the pure white ray, forgets that these constituents exist, and forgets who it is that contemplates. But we who are still in the world do not forget. We insist that the world shall be explained, not denied; for it is not to be dismissed by simply calling it illusion.

Again, if the immediate experience or illuminated Essence of the mystic were literally the All, then he would have nothing to say. "Who knows Him is silent," says the ancient sage. "No man shall look upon the face of God and live," says the prophet. If the mystic in his unwordable transport could at last really throw aside the veil of sense, of finite life and the natural world, and behold the eternal oneness, recognizing himself so that all illusion should

vanish, then for him all earthly communication would cease, there would be no earth and no unregenerate with whom to communicate. For the moment he "descends to meet," and attempts to clothe his vision in the homely garb of finite speech, he indubitably admits the existence of the world which he hopes to convert and of the language whereby he contradicts his own doctrine. In fact, it is characteristic of all who insist that mind or the immediate is the all of being to show by their conduct that they believe most heartily in the existence of both matter and evil; while some of the advocates of irrational idealism are most strenuous in their endeavor for this world's goods.

The true mystic is, however, far above all such worldly motives as this; and we must take him at his word when he affirms that his descent to the lower plane of life is inspired by a self-sacrificing purpose. In other words, any mystic who can still speak to us is necessarily still *himself*, with purposes or desires and the belief that a world exists: his conduct is wiser than his doctrine. The vision is his esoteric truth;* his descent is exoteric, a concession to finite thought. He describes the endless cycles of world-creation in the form of myths and number-

* See P. Deussen, "Elements of Metaphysics," Macmillan & Co., p. 325, Address on the Philosophy of the Vedanta.

less other parables, with which the Vedas and other sacred books abound, in order to symbolize the real. If you object that this perpetual return of the cosmos unto itself must have a permanent basis, since an endless succession of emanations, or involution and evolution, would be a dreary and monotonous cycle of manifestations, then the mystic would tell you that the life of the Spirit can never be comprehended by the intellect: it is sure to seem thoroughly inconsistent and mysterious. The great world of nature apparently spread vividly real around exists only for the intellect of the observer, and the intellect with all its shows passes away with the awakening into that true consciousness where life ceases to be a dream and becomes a living spiritual reality. As finite beings, we are therefore illusions dwelling in a world of illusions. There is, in truth, no "you" and "me," no mystic seeking to guide the novitiate; but we are really and profoundly one in being, one in the world of moral conduct, and one in the vision where the illusion vanishes.

Once more taking the mystic at his word, let us see what follows. Our fair world of nature shall be an illusion, and finite experience a dream. But who are we who listen to this exposition of our true state in life? Are we precisely identical with the mystic, and is his mental world

coincident with ours? Why, then, does he vainly try to convince me of his truth, and why do I insist that it is but a half-truth? Granting that we are all deceived by finite sense, how came we to be mistaken? What is the origin of this wonderfully systematic illusion called nature? Surely, the error exists; for we are just now trying to escape from these perplexities into truth. We suffer pain and observe the effects of evil, we perceive and handle matter; and, if it be not as substantial as it seems, it at least exists as an appearance for which our wills are not responsible. It is surely no explanation of error, evil, and matter to say that they do not exist. To call these facts illusion, and then not to account for them, is merely a shifting of terms. The facts are still with us, awaiting interpretation. It is the discovery of just what illusion or error is that we desire most deeply to make. We cannot be utterly deceived in thus representing a world; and, if we are simply dreaming, then by all means let us have a consistent theory of dreams. But a consistent theory of our dreams would necessarily be one which should satisfy the intellect. It would abound in keen discriminations, in catalogues of laws and their included phenomena. It would distinguish between our permanent dreams, our dreams at night, and our fancies during the day. In a word, it would

result in our nineteenth-century science and philosophy; for, if we are dreaming, then something causes us to dream, gives us a nature capable of dreaming, and is therefore just such a fundamental mind, or Being, as the Reality for which Western philosophy at its best contends. There would then be rational truth, reality would be knowable, and reason would have the place we have assigned it in this book. But this would no longer be mysticism, although the spiritual experiences of the mystic would have their proper place in our doctrine.

It is clear, then, that mysticism has not yet reached the stage of consistent or definite philosophy. It contemplates pure spirit, and ignores facts. It is governed by a foregone conclusion that intellect is the "language of contradiction"; and it does not, therefore, even try to be consistent or rational. The Hindu, who thus judges nature in advance, and who sees only evil in spatial and temporal existence, may very easily proceed to the conclusion that mere caprice reigns there. Again, since nature is one vast dream or illusion, it is quite easy to look upon *avidya*, or ignorance, as its basis. The Hindu thus reasons consistently from his premises, but the one test in every case is this; namely, Is the entire universe in our premises? If so, all that is needed is a complete statement

of the content or substance of the first premise; for it should be the Perfect Whole.

At the opposite pole of human inquiry stands the intellectual observer, patiently examining with microscope and delicately adjusted apparatus the minute as well as the massive constitution of nature. For him facts are everything. He knows nothing about "pure consciousness" and a simple "distinctionless" spirit. He is not even engaged in rationalizing his vast collections of data; for the specialist has no time for this, just as the mystic has no time for scientific observation. He has no deep sense of the harmony or unity of things; for, in order to complete his task, he must spend all his life in the study of variety, the parts or elements which, in discord and struggle here, in nicely balanced opposition there, constitute the vast organism of nature.

Here are the two extremes; and, according to the theory of this book, they are both essential. In the middle ground stands the philosopher, he who believes that everything has a meaning, and that where we really comprehend we can rationalize. On the one hand, the spirit reveals unity: on the other, the intellect discriminates, studies variety, and discovers paradoxes. The mystic declares that unity is simple: the scientific man finds that the universe is infinitely

varied and complex. Accordingly, the philosopher is driven to the conclusion that reality is not simple, it is the sufficient ground or foundation of variety, the basis of all that is complex in nature, — since there is no other origin of our world, — in a word, that God, or the ultimate reality, possesses a *character*. He thus admits and rationalizes all facts, both the complexity of nature and the simplicity of Spirit, — simple, not because it is bare monotony, but because it is a single Whole. Indeed, for him who has learned to understand the wonderful complexity amidst unity, the reign of law and order, and the beauty of the whole as the complement of our own inner life, only a thorough-going rational doctrine of this sort will suffice. It is Western philosophy that will assimilate to itself all that is good in Oriental wisdom, not Western thinkers who will be converted to mysticism. Many Hindus already admit this sufficiently to see the need of adding the Western interpretation of nature to their own view. And thus far they are more than mystics.

This conclusion that Spirit is not a characterless somewhat has been forced upon us by a consideration of the mystical experience itself. For it is clear that only God himself, the great All-perfect, could really know himself immediately. The mystic, still finite, claims all this as an

organ of the divine nature for himself, as though one soul could be the measure of the universe. His conclusion is, therefore, that "the highest moral end is self-realization"; for he recognizes only himself, all else is illusion. He thus revolves around the centre of his own finite consciousness, and consequently leads the egoistic life of asceticism,— a life closely bordering upon selfishness in its worst form. For the tendency is to emphasize the impersonal, to dwell upon the All and the Absolute until the finer human emotions are crushed out, and one neglects the little acts of kindness and sympathy which lie at the basis of true friendship.

That this consciousness or vision is not the all of being becomes clear, let me repeat, when we reflect that truth, consciousness, is *of* something. It is not the thing or essence itself: it is that through which the essence may be known. Consciousness, discrimination, variety, detail, is that which brings out the nature of unity; and, if we deny it to God, do we not really deny that God may know himself? And if the Divine Being himself is both Self and self-cognition, if object is the description of subject, variety of unity, and the universe a revelation of God, can we discover the truth in any way except through imitation of the divine process?

We may assume, then, since the varied uni-

verse exists, that it is the nature of spirit or love to put itself forth. Thus considered, the laws and forces of nature become transfigured with the divinity of the One, objectified or differentiated on all the planes of being. Every fact once more becomes essential; every manifestation, every formative force, becomes instinct with Life; and in observing the minutest microscopic detail we are discovering the wonderful discrimination, the unwordably beautiful diversification of the divine mind thus systematically revealed. To spurn one fact is to despise its divine origin. To confuse the two sides of being is to surrender all intelligibility. To mistake the two for a duality, in any sense separable, is to be ignorant of the sublimest truth of life; namely, that the one is the description or consciousness of the other, viewed now as whole, now as constituent parts, now as living essence, and now as awareness that it lives.

That which is a revelation of the God of pure wisdom and perfect love is not, then, essentially an illusion.

It may be an illusion so far as we see it only *in part;* but so far as it is God himself who spreads before us a beautiful landscape, a vast cycle of natural evolution, or the progressive development of aspiring humanity, we can only speak of it consistently as real. It is not real

in the material sense, nor a subjective picture according to Berkeley's idealism. It is real so far as it is law-governed and the same for all. It is real, organized, and intelligible "for man." To men, then, the best trained intellectual observers, we must look for a consistent account of it. My understanding of nature, art, history, philosophy, and life, is not, then, my personal interpretation alone. It is just as truly the result of co-operative human thought as my perception of a landscape is the co-operation of an external object and of my own perceptive organism. In the same way the higher consciousness is co-operative and relational. It is the finite self contemplating so much only of life on the highest plane — so far as we now know — as one's past experiences have made possible. Insight is, therefore, commensurate with receptivity; and, evidently, there is no infallible criterion by which we are able to determine just how much we are indebted to society, how much to the higher, and how much to the personal self. Probably the most accurate statement of the case would be this: we perceive reality through the eyes of our social consciousness, and in the light of our present personal state of development.

So far, then, as our doctrine accepts the idealistic interpretation of life, it denies to matter

only its alleged independent reality. It "sees the world in God," in the *mind* of God, as a part of the divine life and of the divine self-knowledge. The world is thus the thought of God partly perceived by us, therefore existing independent of us and of our ignorance. And we who perceive it, as well as the world which we perceive, are dependent upon the supreme Mind for existence.

The world, then, may be perfectly beautiful in the absolute sense, as beautiful in detail as it is complete as a whole; but only an absolute Self could see it thus. Emerson's saying, that "the world is not painted or adorned, but is from the beginning beautiful," is thus eternally true — from a point of view. "The universe," he continues, "is the externization of the soul. . . . Since everything in nature answers to a moral power, if any phenomenon remains brute and dark, it is because the corresponding faculty in the observer is not active." * "What can we see or acquire but what we are? . . . As much virtue as there is, so much appears. . . . Not in nature, but in man is all the beauty and worth he sees." † The conclusion then is: "Build, therefore, your own world. As fast as you conform your life to the pure idea in your mind, that will unfold its great proportions." ‡

* Essays, vol. ii. p. 19. † Spiritual Laws. ‡ Nature.

In other words, Understand and develop yourself, that you may be able to appreciate the wonderfully discriminative beauty of the world. The finite self, broadly cultivated, is the clew to the secret of the universe. The mystic misses its beauty on the one side through lack of discrimination, the scientific specialist on the other because the spiritual sense has not been quickened.

The great seers, Swedenborg and Emerson, the one with his discriminative doctrine of correspondences, of the need of both the divine love and the divine wisdom, and the other with his sublime doctrine of self-reliance, — the truth that each man stands for a particular fact, which no one else can represent as well, — thus include all that is best in mysticism without sacrificing the truth of personal relationship, of moral responsibility and growth. Both seers recognize the two sides, yet see their unity. And both have poetically suggested the divine and relatively unwordable communion of the lesser with the greater Self, or Over-soul, — a description in which mysticism is seen at its best, fulfilling the office which only seership can perform.

We may, then, call the world by any term we choose, so long as we really understand what we mean, so long as we make two important discriminations between (1) the world as it exists

for the infinite Self, its sufficient ground or reality, who knows it absolutely as it is, (2) and the world as it exists for finite beings in general, the realm of uniformity and order, of scientific observation, — the world as any particular finite being may perceive it, colored by the kind or grade of intelligence. That the world as God may wish me some time to see it, or as I would myself prefer to see it, is not this present world of incompleted human society, I am therefore forced to admit. I cannot then say with the mystic, "I am perfect now"; for I am in possession of many ideals. That my ideal, and the actual state of my body or of my social conduct, are not the same, I am sure, since it is because I am painfully aware of imperfection that I wish to be better. I am forced to believe that external objects possess certain qualities which, although I may know them only in relation to my organism, are nevertheless *there*. I can realize my ideal only by steadily keeping it in view for months, perhaps for years. If I desire to learn a language, I must proceed patiently, step by step, until the page of Greek or Latin, which once meant nothing to me, becomes increasingly intelligible.

Although that which is for me "gravitates to me," I have to become ready for it. I must do my part. In a word, my efforts are successful

in proportion as I imitate nature, and work both objectively and subjectively. I thus avoid the extremes of materialism, on the one hand, and of self-centred subjectivism, on the other. To a certain degree I must change both myself and the world, so far as bodily and social imperfections are concerned. I may then see the world beautiful; that is, so far as I am a living embodiment of the absolute and eternal Beauty of the universe, in so far as I stand for a beautiful fact. Whether my world of beauty is the same as yours, I could never definitely know unless I could view both my life and yours from the standpoint of the Absolute. Thus far I am explicitly finite. It would be a serious mistake for me to say that I, as a finite being, can behold the world from the absolute point of view. It would be equally erroneous to say that my own ignorance is the basis of this wonderfully beautiful arrangement.

We must conclude, then, that, although the mystic really *means* this larger truth, and although no mystic would accept as his final view the absurdities which his statements imply, mysticism, as commonly understood, is only a partial view of life. In the form in which it has recently appeared in modern thought it abounds in arrogant claims and dogmatic assertions. At its best, it stands for the spiritual

unity of things. For the personal relationship with God, attained in the highest degree by him who called God the Father, for an explanation of the world where existence may not be called evil without doing violent injustice to its high origin, we must turn elsewhere. The mystic is not a worker or thinker. He is essentially the recluse, to be consulted, as one would seek out any master or specialist, for that which his temperament and training fit him to give. Rational philosophy at its best is mysticism arrived at the stage of self-consciousness, and qualified by a consistent account of the world. For the rational consciousness already *is* the spiritual, in part, else it could not exist; the spiritual is already in possession of *reasons* else it could not perceive life's wholeness and unity. That philosophy is alone adequate, then, which gives full recognition to both, and finds their common ground in the higher Self which already possesses the living reality. One may still say, if one pleases, "All is God," but with the explicit understanding that just now one is most decidedly finite and distinct. God is that which knows us and would complete us. As finite beings, we are not all of God, we are organs of the divine nature, — many believe that we shall never be wholly absorbed, — and to efface all distinctions is to surrender the very conscious-

ness or character whereby we are made to stand for some fact in the great self-manifestation of the perfect All. The finite, since it exists, is essential to the perfection of the infinite. A whole without parts is a massively exclusive monotony, an utter nonentity. A God without consciousness, manifestation, and an experience full of contrasts and distinctions, is a bare nothing; but a whole with parts, a God with self-cognition, and beings whom he can love and through whom he can reveal himself, is just such a reality made known through the beautiful world of finite selves, of law and order, qualities and relations, as we now happily possess.

The truth, then, is, so we maintain, and as we have seen throughout our discussion, that there are two points of view; and it is as absurd to deny the one as to deny the other. The infinite and the finite, the absolute and the relative, the abstract and the concrete, God and his inseparable universe, both exist, the one being the revelation of the other. We should explicitly state which point of view we mean in a given case. The whole difficulty consists in passing indiscriminately from the one to the other without discovering the utter inconsistency of the transition.

So far as this chapter is polemical, its one

object is to point out this inconsistency, and not in any sense to antagonize. The present doctrine displaces nothing. It endeavors to be the fulfilment and interpretation of previous views. Sympathetic discrimination is the guide to truth, and probably there is no surer way to avoid inconsistency than fearlessly and patiently to reduce all our beliefs to their logical simplicity and absurdity If our statements imply, as in the case of mysticism, that reality is rationally unknowable, then we may know that we have somewhere gone astray. And not until we are ready to lay aside every theory we may have held in the past, whenever a better doctrine is presented, do we really care more for truth than for the forms and personalities in which it is clothed.

Higher than all speculations about the universe at large, we must place that personal revelation which draws the soul near to God as the ever-present Friend, the divine Father. This alone makes our conception of God a living factor in daily consciousness. This alone, if we give it its due place, shows that we have really made progress in comprehension of life's true meaning, since no doctrine is sound which even theoretically deprives us of the sublimest experience of human life; namely, the upward look of love and worship for that which is higher than ourselves.

Avoidance of all confusion between the personal revelation, the revelation of natural phenomena, and the living Essence in its entirety, therefore, indicates the escape from pantheism into a just apprehension of God. Not all of God speaks to the soul within, nor in the world of nature without. Yet all that we have held sacred remains — in its place — not as a complete, but as a partial revelation; that which is "of" or "from" God, as Swedenborg would put it, — that which is not God himself, yet is not independent of him. We have emphasized the limitations of finite life, its narrowness and one-sidedness, in order that there shall be no misapprehension on this point. Man is finite, imperfect, progressive, *included* in a life larger than his own; a learner amidst a wealth of facts that will in due time teach him their meaning. God is infinite, perfect, eternal, *including*, the prime mover, observer, and source of the experience whereby man and the universe are perfected. As a thought dwells in the mind of the thinker, inseparable from it, yet a distinct object of perception, just because of its precision and contrast, so the soul of man dwells in the life and love, the beauty and wisdom of God, persistently itself, yet never alone.

Such relationship as this is not mystical, but living, personal, and intelligible. It is based

upon a fact which takes its place beside all other facts; namely, the existence of the higher self. As mere fact, then, which all may interpret as they will, the truth cannot be overlooked that the mind sees manifestations of God within as surely as the eye gathers revelations of him from without. He who *thinks* he understands this self may very easily mistake it for the pure Absolute. He who knows it so well that he is still overcome by humility that God is so great, really stands in that holy presence where wisdom dwells.

All the mysteries of illumination we cannot fully explain. Yet, where our knowledge fails, we still know definitely why. How it happens that we start to develop and adopt the philosophical conception of God we do not fully know. We simply begin by noting* that we awoke one morning to find ourselves drifting into certain convictions which will not now be shaken off. The opening pages of the Book of Life have been lost, owing to the book's antiquity. But fragmentary as the world-picture is, when we have drawn it as best we may, it will never satisfy us while one aspect of life's totality remains neglected. Not without purpose in the divine economy has the great intellectual movement of the West spread abroad

*See page 11.

among the later nations of the world. A sublime phase of the infinite self-manifestation is typified by the mysticism of India and of all ages. But Egypt, Palestine, Greece, Rome, Scandinavia, China, Japan, and the rest, have also played their part in the progressive revelation of infinite intelligence. The long ages of which geology treats, the contests of evolution, the beauty and the gloom alike in the world of nature and the world of the inner life, — all this tells us what the universe means, all this assumes its place in the great world-system, which reveals the life and wisdom, the glory and love of God, and without which the divine life would not be the Perfect Whole. Never, until we understand all this — the complete manifestation of life upon our earth and its history in the light of the divine ideal, and the unknown revelations of the heavens — shall we really grasp the objective life of God. And above, beyond, beneath, encompassing all, will still exist the Mind, the supreme Intelligence whose spirit imbues all being, therefore knowing himself, not in a mystery, but in the clear light of completed truth.

V.

INTUITION.

"There is guidance for each one of us, and by lowly listening we shall hear the right word."—*Emerson.*

We must now descend for a time from the sublime heights whither mysticism has carried us, as if in a vision of unutterable glory, and apply the same discriminative test which has thus far guided us in our discussion of life as a whole to the nature and development of the perceptive organism itself. In a sense, this will be a repetition of the foregoing discussion; yet this detailed analysis is absolutely essential to a practical application of our doctrine, and the doctrine itself will receive further confirmation if we arrive at the same conclusion along independent lives. What, then, is intuition, and what are its limitations?

It has long been customary among students of psychology to attribute to the human mind a series of separate powers or faculties, as though the mind were divided into so many distinct planes of consciousness or departments of mental action. Sensation, memory, emotion, will, and thought have thus been described as different

forces; and the attempt has frequently been made to prove that the mind is dual, one self being sharply contrasted with the other, while all these faculties were somehow deemed the instruments of a unitary soul. Then, too, it has been customary to compare people most unfavorably with one another, because some minds display unusual insight and spiritual perception, while in others the sense of the spiritual seems to be wholly lacking.

It becomes clear on careful analysis, however, that there are no independently active faculties and forces, but only differing phases of mental action, in all of which perception, memory, emotion, attention, will, and thought, in its general sense, are more or less involved. Perception is thus "the whole mind in the act of acquiring knowledge." Nor is there, strictly speaking, a faculty of intuition or spiritual perception, which a few possess to the exclusion of the less favored many, since it is rather to the predominance of certain phases of psychic or mental action that a marked degree of such insight is due; while every one probably possesses faint traces of it, although obscured by other and more characteristic mental phenomena. I shall not, therefore, confine this discussion to any particular aspect of the higher perception in man, but consider the various allied phenomena, and the

general manifestations of psychic power, known interchangeably as intuition, insight, the higher light, and the spiritual sense, all of which may be defined as first or immediate inlets of knowledge.

It is futile for those who lack intuition in its higher sense to affirm that there is no such thing as direct insight or guidance. To many minds the presence of this higher light is just as certain as is the existence of the physical forces to the materialist, its dictates just as clear as the most lucid reasoning, its hope, its inspiration, and its guidance the one sure basis of faith in the goodness, the rationality, and purpose of the universe. They rely upon it, consult it, endeavor to preserve it in its purity, and make it their guide in all moral and spiritual conduct. The proof of its existence, like that of the mystical transport, is therefore an account of the experiences peculiar to or most characteristic of it; and it is far better, on the whole, to describe it, and show how it may be cultivated, than to attempt an adequate explanation of it. As we have seen in the foregoing chapters, the great facts of life are made known immediately, and are therefore their own evidence. The utmost we know about our personal selves is what we *do*. We know the mind objectively, through its manifestations; and, if we are not able fully to ex-

plain the existence of the higher subject or self in man, we are at least made aware through the indubitable phenomena of intuition that the existence of such a self is a positive fact. And intuition is found to have a scientific basis in the fact that direct or immediate experience in some form is essential to *all* experience whatsoever.

1. Perhaps the most common form in which immediate knowledge comes to us, aside from the presentations of physical sense, through which we know the outer world, is that of an impression or guidance in reference to our personal welfare. Premonitions, warnings, the foreshadowings of success in some important undertaking, and impressions that one is to meet or to receive a call from a friend may be classed under this head, Such thoughts sometimes flash into the mind when one is absorbed in an entirely different direction, and with such emphasis and conviction that one is forced to obey them. Accidents and serious mistakes are frequently avoided in this way; and it is highly probable that, if we would always obey it, some note of warning would always be sounded to the inmost ear. The ability to perceive the thoughts and feelings of people at a distance, to read letters before they are opened, and to discern character through the first meeting with a stranger, and

many of the curious phenomena known as second sight or lucidity properly belong here; for in all these experiences an innate capacity or tendency to observe such phenomena is implied in the fact that they occur. In some people the sense of locality is so strongly developed that it amounts to direct sight, much as if the mind could actually travel or extend itself to a distant town; and some are able to find their way about in strange surroundings with an instinct almost as sure as that of the Indian.

The usual method in such cases is either to wait in expectant silence for a moment or two until the "leading" comes, or to send the thought out in various directions until one has an impression regarding the right road to take or the proper line of conduct to pursue. Oftentimes, when one is contemplating a journey, it is well to travel in thought to the various towns or countries one intends to visit, endeavoring to get a general forecast of the proposed journey, and thereupon deciding whether or not it is wise to go. If one encounters no obstacle in this rapid glance over the proposed field, one may be confident that all will be well. Personally, I should never take a journey without this preparatory experience; and I have so many times verified such impressions that I see no reason to doubt them. In fact, one may learn to get them

in regard to the most common details of life. One may ask whether it is advisable to read a certain book, whether or no a friend will be at home on whom one proposes to call; and if, in general, one has certain projects in mind which one hopes to realize at some future day, the impression will usually come, and the way open at the proper time. Again, in matters requiring careful exercise of judgment, and in all decisive steps in life, it is well to make the start or attempt, or make a tentative move in accordance with some plan not yet fully adopted. If one blunders at once, as, for example, in writing an important letter, or meets with hindrances on every hand, it is usually inadvisable to persist, whereas the absence of obstructions and of deterring impressions may be taken as good evidence of a clear pathway. The guidance is not invariably positive, nor does it always persist if one is wilfully determined to ignore it. But in some unmistakable way it reveals itself to the one who gives it the confidence and attention which it justly deserves.

In all questions of a personal nature it is extremely difficult at first to avoid the interference of individual desires and selfish motives, which may often be erroneously taken for genuine guidance. One longs for a certain object, and feels that it must and will be attained. Personal

wishes, all sorts of temptations and inclinations, are sure to intrude for a time, — for all these are known intuitively, — until one learns the distinguishing feature of true guidance, particularly of the higher insight known as spiritual perception; namely, its disinterestedness. The purer the insight, so much the less of personal desire and preconception does it contain. Intellectual perception and prejudice relate to the individual, and depend on the knowledge gained through past experience. But true insight is of the universal, relates to the general good, and is most likely to come to those whose motives are purest, who possess due receptivity, humility, and willingness to recognize a higher self, and to those who make that fine discrimination which separates personal inclination from duty.

Experience is the only safe test of such guidance, and the surest way to learn the above discrimination is through varied mistakes. After years of faith in intuition one is likely to be deceived occasionally through the intrusion of personal desire. It is difficult to pursue the narrow pathway of the ethical life, and careful watchfulness is the only safeguard.

One sometimes wonders why man is left so much in the dark, why one cannot have more guidance. Yet the purpose of experience would obviously be defeated, were all questions to be

answered. We apparently have just as much guidance as is consistent with our need and our state of development. When repeated failures have taught us how to obey the higher law, we shall need less experience and consequently have more help. But, if we had enjoyed infallible guidance from the start, and had always known the nature of events before they happened, where should we be to-day, how could we have learned our lesson?

It is also necessary to distinguish between intuition as a new and immediate product of the mind, or the gift of a higher intelligence, and those ideas, opinions, beliefs, and preconceptions which, borrowed from other people, from books, and gleaned through our own conscious investigations, are turned over in the subconscious mind, some time to flash into the thought as if coming directly to us by inspiration. Intuition in this sense may be mere remembered wisdom, and the insight consists in that sudden grasp of our own meaning which reveals an unsuspected wealth of truth in long-cherished ideas. Many people possess insight of this sort who do not rise to the plane of spiritual illumination.

2. Akin to this more general insight, which all people possess to a degree, is the sense or instinct which guides a man unerringly to his special task or vocation. Many occupations and

trades may be learned by dint of sheer labor and perseverance; yet it is generally acknowledged that the poet, the artist, the musician, the writer, and the thinker are born with that æsthetic intuition, that feeling for the beautiful, the harmonious, and essential, which distinguishes them from people in whom this sense is developed to the point of appreciation, but not of production. The sense of the meaning and reason of things leads the philosopher beneath the surface to that which is fundamental in a just interpretation of life. Moral and religious leaders move forward just as steadily toward their goal, inspired by an unquenchable love for the spiritually true and good, — an instinct which they would no more gainsay than they would doubt the existence of the unregenerate world which they labor to reform. The scientific man in his search into the laws and forces of nature, now employing his creative imagination, now adopting an hypothesis which suddenly occurred to him, and now exercising the utmost caution that his insight may not lead him to read too much in the phenomena of nature, is probably guided far more by a well-developed instinct for truth than by a consciously applied intellectual method. "The light by which we see in this world comes out from the soul of the observer," says Emerson. The chief task in early life is to

discover one's leading talent, to rely upon it, cultivate it, and learn how to follow its intuitive guidance. There is no surer pathway to true success, true originality and freedom, than to follow this native leading along the lines and under the conditions in which it most readily sheds its light.

Intuition in this sense is emphatically personal or individual. It is the instinct of character, of talent and genius, and naturally differs in each individual. In the last analysis, then, what one frequently means by faith or intuition is one's self or soul; and one could no more convey it to another than one could communicate one's soul.

It is well, then, to distinguish between intuition as it exists for and may, within certain limits, be cultivated by all, and its unique form in the individual soul; for it would be irrational to maintain that every one can have the wonderful insight of genius. This distinction also settles the question as to the possibility of special guidance. Such guidance would obviously be partial, and therefore unjust. Yet the quality or degree of guidance or insight naturally varies with the kind of soul and the degree of its spiritual consciousness. Intellectual matters require intellectual discernment. He who devotes himself to the higher life therewith receives help

in proportion to his receptivity. One might then seem to have special guidance, when, as a matter of fact, one's life is simply in closer sympathy with the higher law, and is therefore guided according to the needs of the life of self-sacrifice. The light, the guidance, the power, exist for all who are willing to make the sacrifice.

3. Another and most necessary form of immediate help is faith, not of the credulous sort, but that true wisdom which well understood experience inspires. Experience may at any time reveal facts which will throw doubt on our boasted science. It is the prerogative of faith to fill the gap where intellect cannot reach. Sometimes one maintains courage and self-possession for months at a time when the present offers no comforting prospect. Again and again one becomes involved in difficulties and diseases which one is intellectually sure will prove too great a burden for the human organism to bear. One loses hope, and tries to become utterly discouraged. Yet for many people there is ever an undoubting conviction in the inmost depths of the soul, a something that will not permit one to doubt, but which in some way knows from the beginning that all will be well. For such fortunate mortals there is no safer advice than to trust this sublime faith, "though all the way be

dark." "We are to know that we are never without a pilot," again says Emerson. "When we do not know how to steer, and dare not hoist a sail, we can drift. The current knows the way, though we do not."

The presence of this living intuition, this guiding, sustaining faith, is, for those who are most deeply aware of it, the one unmistakable evidence that love dwells at the heart of the universe. To be conscious of it even in a slight degree is to know the true economy of life, and to be spared that endless and often morbid scrutiny of one's motives which is the fate of the keenly conscientious. It is difficult to distinguish the conscience from this sublimer insight, and intuition at its best seems rather to absorb and transcend it than to be separated from it. But the conscience alone is often negative, and apt to lead one too far into the realm of the scrupulously self-conscious. He who awaits the guidance of the higher self breathes a purer and healthier atmosphere, where self-examination is seldom required. The distinction is a fine one, and to some it may seem a trifle over-wrought. That there is a sounder and surer method of moral conduct than that which depends on the analysis of one's motives is, however, a fact to all who possess the higher light.

The contrast will be clear to those who have

tested their intuitions through years of varied experience and search for truth. It is a characteristic of human nature to plan, to question and doubt. Troublesome problems press upon us for solution. In one way or another the questions of duty, of vocation, of financial support, and the home, must be settled. Oftentimes these problems must receive a personal solution, and nothing can wholly displace the clear-cut and self-reliant decision which indicates individual strength and character. But a time comes when purely personal plans, desires, and ambitions seem like mere by-play as compared with this direct leading from within. One may still devise, plot, and build air-castles, if one will; one may examine a proposed line of conduct in the light of prudential and financial reasons. Yet one cannot escape the conviction that all this is superficial amusement, and is only needed when one is not yet sure of the higher guidance. For all who can detect the higher moving there is, in fact, just one way to the solution of all difficulties: put yourself in quiet, expectant, trustful harmony with the inner tendency, and await its guidance.

The higher self comprehends a vast range of experience and truth, unknown and unperceived by the lower self, which it understands and uses. It is impersonal, beneficent, direct; not to be

disturbed in its assurance, though it give no reasons; a superior, efficient, unitary power, in striking contrast to the egoistic, short-sighted self, where pride and selfish motives vie with each other for mastery. It will not reveal its full self, even to the keenest observer, its methods are particularly its own, and it absolutely refuses to become in any sense the instrument of finite and selfish ends. It is an end in itself, and a master of spiritual strategy. Compared with its firm emphasis of the right and the true, made known at the proper moment, all purely human endeavors seem vain and weak. It will not speak until the proper time. It does not adjust itself to the standards of human impatience. It wastes no energy in premeditation. Nor does it call out in a loud voice, "This is the way." But, as silently as the sky lights up with the glories of morning, when the hour has come for the sun once more to shine abroad upon the earth, the way opens. Help, friends, and opportunities come unexpectedly; and events harmonize with a depth of meaning and beauty even more provocative of awe than the unutterable grandeurs of nature.

4. It is not, then, these occasional impressions and guidances which make intuition very nearly the most real of all life's gifts, but the continuity, the harmony, and equanimity of this

ever-present and all-knowing self, before which all other selves pale into their true significance. One feels indubitably sure that life is made of one hidden piece, that a somewhat presides over its events, in whose wisdom one may trust, and that life as a whole has a meaning, a purpose, wherein all things, all so-called happenings, all aspirations, belong together, and where there is a steady march of events toward the great goal of the universe. This guidance enters into the minutest details. Circumstances are adjusted, people come forward to play their part, one is made ready intellectually and spiritually, and nothing at times seems more certain than the prearrangement by a higher power of every moment of experience. And when one looks back over ten, fifteen, twenty years, wherein events have thus fitted marvellously together, what else can one do but believe, worship, and take courage, admitting in all humility that a divine tendency has shaped life toward ends of its own, using us as its willing instruments?

5. It is obvious that intuition is a word of degrees. In the largest sense, all that we feel is an intuition. We know of our own truest existence, and of the selves that perplexed us in Chapter II., through intuition. The world at large is made known through intuition, and the

thinking process itself is often apparently a feeling or immediate sense of the truth rather than a conviction forced upon us by reason. This statement at first sight seems inconsistent with the conclusions of the foregoing chapter; namely, that the so-called immediate experience is in part an *interpretation* of feeling by means of ideas. Yet it is, after all, because intuition has proved true in the past, and has persisted through all our experience, that we are so willing to trust it. Those who follow intuition intelligently then, as we shall see, obey it from *reason*, from a rational process so rapid that we know not that it is reason. But thoughtful analysis brings out this unsuspected reason; and, the more one thinks, the more reason one discovers why intuition is thus incontestably superior.

If in my doubt I ask whether I do not subconsciously devise the plans which have been attributed to intuition; if, in a word, I doubt whether anything but myself exists,— then, as we have already seen, I have the great living intuition of the universe on my hands to explain, then I am infinitely grander and greater than I suspected, I am as large as the universe, and possess unawares an incalculably higher process of reasoning than my conscious thought. This real, completed Self is the living Absolute.

In short, from the point of view of intuition, I pass imperceptibly from the perception of an outer world, my own thoughts and feelings, my impressions, guidances and illuminations, to the higher Self of pure wisdom and love, whose source is the very heart and substance, the ground and life, of the total universe. Somewhere in the series I, the finite self, exist. Above and below extends the infinity of being, whose presence I know immediately, and which I understand so far as I have thought. My perception of the world is partly myself. My most secret and personal thought is partly a superior intuition. Guidance, desire, will, faith, illumination,— all this is in turn partly myself, my temperament, character, experience, and personality, and partly the purpose, the will and wisdom of God.

Not until I compare the lowest with the highest self do I perceive the difference between the divine and human intuitions. Then I discover that the impersonal or higher intuition is the blending point of two worlds, or aspects of the divine self-manifestation. Above and beyond extends the living Reality itself. Beneath, is the world of by-play, of finite amusement and speculation, pleased with itself, fond of its own paradoxes and its lengthy disquisitions wherein the reality is simply talked about. Above, exists

the great unit, a single voice, a single guidance, unmistakable, unwavering, persistent, teleological, and systematic.

Below, the finite self listens in humility, trying to catch the faintest whisper of that transcendent voice, to absorb new life, new ideas, and new ideals into itself, in order to reproduce them in the varied world of human doubt and striving. Impartially and freely the superior Self bestows its bounties upon the listener in proportion to his worth, his ability to absorb and give forth, and his receptivity, or willingness to withdraw his own opinion. On the one hand, the inshining is divine and infallible: on the other, by becoming human, it partakes of the limitations of the recipient.

It would tell us all truth if we could comprehend it. It would give us all power if we could use it. Such wisdom as we bear away to another is confessedly a poor report of the sublime vision which we seek to describe. To behold the vision, to become vividly conscious of the deep spiritual unity of things, is to know the greatest joy in life, while the descent to the realm of the finite is once more to recognize the two points of view, and to be conscious that reality is not an isolated and selfish being, but holds within its boundless love all the complexities of a struggling and aspiring world.

Intuition may, in fact, be compared to the pure ideal of God, the completed whole, the eternal now, while reason is its systematic and detailed development in the realm of space and time. Again one discovers the great two-fold experience,— involution and evolution, substance and form, subject and object, ideal and realization, vision and interpretation, feeling and thought, abstract and concrete, desire and fulfilment, theory and practice, self-development and self-denial, mind and matter, as so many members of one whole. He is well balanced who sees that the two are bound each to each by ties of eternal necessity, and that one may not safely develop in the one direction without a corresponding development in the other.

It is true that in matters of conduct, and whenever the mind is spiritually illumined from within, intuition must not be tampered with as it comes, but followed like a light in a forest where one does not even pretend to know the way. It is the guiding star of the soul, and demands implicit trust and readiness. It becomes clearer, more confiding and helpful in proportion as it is obeyed; and he who presumes to dictate its methods will surely cut himself off from its inspiration. Yet it is characteristic of the higher light to take up into itself the lesser lights of instinct and intellect. Reason is the

necessary unfoldment or interpretation of immediate experience in all its phases. It is the faculty which examines itself, and seeks the cause and meaning of things. Intuition deals with wholes, of whose parts we are for the time unaware, just as in looking at a distant forest from a mountain summit we do not see the separate leaves or even the separate trees, but only the waving mass of green and brown, which combine into one great whole of beauty. Reason is that closer scrutiny which reveals what we mean by beauty, how its essentials are combined, and its ultimate basis of reality. It is emotion, experience, intuition, rendered explicit. Intuition oftentimes permits us but a glimpse of truth, like the flash of lightning on the darkest night, which illumines all our surroundings for a moment, and then dies out before we grasp their relationship. Reason is that measured and law-governed evolution by which all the mysteries of nature are gradually spread out before us. It is the essential and necessary verification of insight, without which truth is not truth at all.

On the other hand, reason without seership is at far greater disadvantage. The intellect often leads one into a maze of errors, and things are declared impossible on *a priori* grounds which are afterward witnessed in fact, thus forcing the intellect to confess its short-sightedness. An

unknown world of verities lies beyond the domain of purely intellectual observation, and a latent suspicion exists that even our best rational results are not as sound as we deem them. Yet the fact that the intellect is often blind and mistaken in its conclusions is no reason for belittling it in the fashion now so popular among a certain class of minds. A very subtle form of self-conceit has grown up among students of occult science and Hindu lore, as though the intellect only existed as a fit object for their scorn, Western science as a synonyme for ignorance, and their own dogmas as another form of eternal truth. Such people have wandered far from the true spirit. No one needs intellectual cultivation as much as those who thus decry it. Only he, let me repeat, whose doctrine is visionary, unsubstantial, and inconsistent, he who has neglected to ask himself precisely what he means by the terms he uses, by his belief and his faith, thereby endeavoring to eliminate all mysticism, would ever think of decrying human reason, the one balance wheel of all our thinking.

It is a universal failing of those who take intuition for their guide to become dogmatic. Intuition alone, in this early stage, is even more deceptive than reason, because it is credulous, while reason is more cautious and discerning. It is not enough to state things on authority, nor

can insight safely be accepted in the simple form in which it comes. Beware, then, of every one who lays down the law, who says unqualifiedly reality is this or spirituality is that, because he feels it to be thus and thus. Some one else may declare it to be the reverse. It is one thing to have an experience or illumination, and quite another thing to interpret it correctly. Every statement, whether rational or intuitive, necessarily falls short of the reality. It can be true at best only to an aspect or phase of life, and should be received with suspicion if it purports to be more. It is the intuition or immediate experience oftentimes that is true, not the statement of it; and, whenever intuition is associated with dogma, it may safely be taken with a grain of allowance, if not rejected as utterly spurious.

The danger of following intuition too far is also apparent to everybody who has carefully noted the mental difference between man and woman. With all due respect to the insight revealed in "woman's reason,"—and it is evident that it should be trusted by man far oftener than it is,—it is well known that its emotional accompaniment befogs the judgment, makes one too susceptible, and clearly shows the lack of the one common meeting-point and firm foundation of finite intelligence,—reason. As a

rule, woman needs reason as much as man lacks spiritual insight; and the crying need of all who would be well developed intellectually, morally, and spiritually, is the harmonious and simultaneous development of both.

It is clear, then, that there are many by-paths which lead the truth-seeker aside, many deceptive forms of intuition where reason alone can save us from error, while the higher light, truly comprehended, is reason itself anticipated and fulfilled. The test of insight is experience clarified and systematized by reason. There is no standard of appeal from mind to mind and from book to book until intuition has come into full sanity and adjustment to eternal truth through the sound, persistent, and dispassionate discrimination which characterizes human reason at its best.

Intuition may therefore become our weakness or our strength, according to our understanding of it and of ourselves. Combined with reason, while still preserved in its pristine clearness, it is surely a grade higher than either intuition or reason alone. "Reason," says Dr. T. T. Munger, "may at last decide what is truth, but not until it has won the consent of the whole man." It is this immediate sense of truth which satisfies the mind both intellectually and spiritually, this incalculably rapid survey of ourselves

by which we discover that a new truth meets no contradictory fact in our character or experience, that gives the deepest assurance of the right. There is a conviction born of experience interpreted by reason which no analysis can measure. It is like the electric spark which unites oxygen and hydrogen by some mystical process into something totally different called water. We are convinced by something higher than ourselves, something that knows us, that reaches the burning-point for a moment in our inmost consciousness, and then leaves us to study the impression left upon us. When we rationalize it we may fully trust it. In a deeper sense, to understand it in full, one must *be* that which illumines, that self-existent Unity whence springs the twofold experience of our human life.

The foundation of intuition, therefore, lies beyond finite individual experience; and in one sense it can no more be defined than consciousness, which may only be described in terms of itself. The difficulty of defining the subject of self-consciousness is, in fact, our present problem, in other phraseology. Intuition is bound up with the personality, and what seems to be a guidance or inspiration is often the mere quickening of the divine ideal. The soul sees and knows immediately because it *is* just that ideal, events are adjusted, and the way made open because a

higher Power is working through us. It is highly important, then, to know just what we mean by the term "intuition," whether it be mere impulse or opinion parading under borrowed garb, instinct, or subconscious repetition of that which has been consciously acquired through past experience, the individual insight of the soul which no other being may share or the more general experience which this chapter urges every one to cultivate, — the experience of the thing itself, like a visit to a foreign land instead of mere speculation about it. For intuition in some form is fundamental to all knowledge. As employed by Kant,* it is the foundation of all perceptions of space, time, and their determinations, "that representation which can be given previously to all thought." It is that insight into the reality of things which enables us to represent them in certain forms and in successive relations, time and space being in this sense the real forms of our intuition, and distinguishable by their universality and necessity.

6. But, postponing the more technical discussion of intuition, and with a word of caution, — namely, to remember the discriminations of the foregoing analysis, — we may now say with unqualified earnestness, Open your soul to illumination in its purest form, trust your insight,

* Critique of Pure Reason.

your faith, your strong impression, *believe* in it, let it have spontaneous expression through you as though you really believed it to be a perfect law, watch for it, await its coming, and give it a most thorough test. The experiment is worth the while, even when we know not whence our daily bread is coming from, and when we "take no thought for the morrow." Not until one thus puts one's faith to the severest test — and this means the complete surrender of all secondary interests and business methods — does one really act as though one believed it true. That intuition in this sublimest sense, after it has undergone the keen examination of reason and of genuine illumination, and proved its superiority to the intellect, is a guide which may be implicitly followed, surely every one will in due time discover, who follows it intelligently, not blindly, and has the patience to adopt the conscientious method above suggested. And, now that we have said a good word for reason, we must at last confess that, thus purified and developed, intuition reveals the living, loving spiritual reality itself before which even reason must sometimes stand in awe.

But it is hard for people to believe that such insight or guidance is possible, harder still to persuade them that every one possesses germs of it. They will not listen for it, they will not

put their personal selves aside, nor yield their preconceptions and personal desires. Or, if they at last decide to abide by it, they forget that we must not be inactive, but must do our part in order to insure its co-operation, contentedly doing the task at hand, laying aside all anxiety, yet ever on the alert to catch its slightest whisper.

Those who seek such guidance must therefore pay its price. The first step is to *desire* it, to believe that it is competent to provide for all real needs, and to discover how we have all the time unconsciously used it while attributing its help to other sources. The next step is to brush aside the great mass of débris which has so long obscured the tiny tendrils of this fairest growth of the higher life, to forego this endless pursuit of self, of pleasure and gain, — in a word, to cultivate a simple life. Our complex modern life, with its innumerable cares and interests, leaves no moment free for genuine spiritual growth. The greatness, the wisdom, and strength, of intuition, lie in its simplicity. It possesses and will teach the soul in a few short sentences the very essence of all that is true and valuable in the much-lauded wisdom of men. It is the pith, the spirit and beauty of life; it is love, goodness, gentleness, and humility itself, and humility must seek out its own most original way to the secrets and power at its command.

A new interest and pleasure are added to life for all whose desire it is to conform their lives to its sublime dictates. Everything in life takes on the hue of the divine inshining. It paints the world in colors of rarest beauty and radiance, suffusing a charm where all seemed mean and despicable before. It compels one to be an optimist, to have unwavering faith in the eternal goodness of the universe, to believe in fate, and love the omnipresent Father. It will not always illumine the soul when one most desires it. We need all the guidance we can get from other sources. We need self-reliance and unflinching energy. Above all, we must be sure that the guidance is genuine. But, doubt it as we may, wander off its narrow pathway as we may, it is ever there, — a great, living, spiritual fact. When it presents no obstacle, we are free to act. When it guides, there is no greater happiness than to obey.

VI.

FATE.

"Our wills are ours, we know not how;
Our wills are ours, to make them thine."

Tennyson.

It is one of the proudest achievements of modern science that it has formulated a relatively trustworthy conception of nature as a great law-governed unit. Unity of force, unity and persistence of substance, with one universal law of becoming, or evolution, — these are the truths again and again emphasized by her exponents. Man, matter, life, and mind, — all are parts of the great unitary whole, and all conform to the laws of the mighty organism in which each part stands in some necessary relation to the life and meaning of the All.

In connection with this continual emphasis of the reign of law, extending as it is claimed even to the will of man, the theory of determinism has once more come into great prominence. Since man, it is argued, belongs to the All, the cosmical whole, he has to conform to its laws and is shaped by its events; and, "having of

necessity to conform, he is not free," either by organism or environment. Whatever happens occurs as the result of a certain cause adequate to produce it. Human life is part of a great causal series extending back into an infinite past; and what man accomplishes depends on his ancestry, his temperament, heredity, and environment. Some thinkers even regard the mind and its attributes as outgrowths of matter; and systems of philosophy, ethics, and psychology, have been built up on the supposition that the higher qualities in man stand in relation to the outer or objective world as an effect is related to its cause.

That man is indeed compelled by a stern necessity to think, to see, and to express just what he is, and no more, seems to be a fact of common-sense experience. We are so organized as to grasp fragments of the outer world, and then to think along the narrow lines of mental development, depending upon imitation, education, and environment to eke out our scant supply of knowledge. Whatever lies beyond our narrow range is no more existent for us than the beautiful world of lights and shades forever excluded from the experience of the man born blind.

Moreover, a strange fate, called "luck" or "fortune," seems wonderfully interwoven in the fabric of experience. Some men labor for years

in a chosen pursuit without success; while for others the way is always open, everything they touch is turned to account, and all nature seems ready to become active in their service. Even the considerations of the foregoing chapter apparently point to this conclusion. Those who possess intuition, or the spiritual sense, to any considerable degree seem especially favored; and that mortal may indeed be accounted a favorite of nature whose fate it is to be an optimist, who is blessed with good health and a congenial occupation. Belief in fate seems, in fact, to be the basic principle of those who rely upon the higher guidance; for the conviction is strong that life is all of one piece, and the fact that there is a higher or spiritual law seems to be strong evidence that determinism applies with equal force to the superior life.

That there is one all-inclusive motive in the universe is, in truth, emphasized by all that we know of every plane of existence. Man is surely bound to stand for some certain fact as an individual expression of this central purpose. No other purpose could hold our great world-order together as a single system. Nothing could defeat this one purpose, for there is no other reality. Not one atom and not one idea could fall outside the great All or Whole; and, apparently, every event, every detail, every slightest happen-

ing, is determined by this necessary relationship, for otherwise the eternal Self would not possess absolute liberty and power.

Yet, surely, that view of life would be short-sighted in the extreme which should accept a belief in determinism without asking what determinism implies in detail. For, although an irresistible Power may rule the universe as a whole, so that its infinite purpose cannot be modified or impeded in the slightest degree, yet such a law of world-government is not really understood by us until we witness its effect in detail; and this minute analysis may lead to an entire reversal of our attitude in regard to destiny.

It is to the lasting credit of our nineteenth-century science that it has made this precise analysis and reduced causation from a sudden, an inscrutable, a providential and miraculous act to a slowly changing series of events, occupying an incalculable period of time. So that, whereas under the old belief in creation there was absolutely no room for freedom, since everything was foreordained, now by the term "fate" we are to understand that the slightest changes are, by the continuity of natural law, bound to produce modifications in what follows. In other words, life, and even nature with its solid mountains of stone and its vast continental areas, is in

a constant flux, — is taking shape and changing before our eyes. The apparently insignificant social or political event which we pass by almost unnoticed to-day is remembered by the social organism, and made use of by the great mass of humanity. Everything in nature and in human life — so far as man belongs to nature — is at some time plastic; and in the formative period of the earth, of the mountains, the seashore, in the origin, development, and subsequent modification of the varied vegetable and animal species, in the growth of history, of civilization, art, science, literature, the most trivial or "fortuitous" event is likely to leave an indelible impress on the face of time. Everything in the natural world is necessarily thus and so, unless a thousand possible events or contingencies happen to interfere. And these contingencies are not infringements of natural law, any more than when an apple is picked from the tree instead of permitting it to fall according to the law of gravitation.

As one of the determining causes in this great stream of constantly changing events, — perhaps the most potent in the entire series of phenomena, — the formative intelligence of man demands our fullest consideration before we come to any conclusion in regard to determinism. Here, again, life is fated to be thus and so, unless some-

thing happens to change its entire course. It must be admitted, then, at the outset that, whether fate compels man to play a certain part in the formation of his life-history or whether his own mind compels so-called fate to do his bidding, the intelligence of man is a powerful factor in every detail of his career; for, however you put it, on the nature and power of *ideas* depends the character of human experience.

This will be clear if we put it in the form of a dilemma: Is fate absolute? Then our attitude should be wise adjustment to it, with fate's ideal for our own, since it is a matter of economy to take life with the least degree of friction. Do we create our own fate? Once more it is a matter of economy and of necessity to have an ideal. Thus there is no escape from the conclusion that fate is not absolute, and that, however we regard it, — whether we accept freedom as a dictum of consciousness or believe that everything is determined, even to the day of our death, — our ideas about it play some part in shaping our conduct, either through adjustment, through complaint and rebellion, or through co-operation; for we inevitably assume some habitual and effective attitude of mind toward it. This attitude, look at it as we may, is a conclusion, a deduction from experience; and our future

conduct thus becomes the child of conscious choice.

> "Nor can they
> Be free to keep the path
> Who are not free to stray."

Is the day laborer who struggles for mere physical sustenance governed by an ideal? you ask. He is at least governed by a sense of necessity, and this is his motive or attitude toward life. He is contented, we will say. This contentment is his daily habit of thought. Or he is discontented. This, in turn, is his habitual attitude, and bespeaks an element or ideal in him which has never yet found expression. In either case his attitude would be a generalization based on experience, an *idea* triumphant over all others, and thus far freely shaping his daily conduct. He may not be free to possess all that he wills; for no one possesses absolute freedom, and no one in our phase of life, who truly knows himself, is perfectly satisfied. But, if he labors because he is eager to perform a certain task, he acts to this extent of his own free will. So far as he rebels, he is again consciously exercising his free-born right, just as we are free to plan, to build air-castles and the like, when intuition tells us that all this is mere by-play as compared with the higher guidance. Experience alone can teach the true economy of life: it is our choice to continue to resist or freely to obey.

It is clear, then, that determinism would take away all responsibility, and leave no room for the moral life. It would seem an easy way of escape from life's perplexities thus to lay aside all care and responsibility, in calm and submissive belief that even the day of one's death is decreed by fate. But this would be a consciously chosen attitude, and one could not escape its penalties. "We are placed in charge of ourselves," says a recent writer, "by the fact of self-consciousness." That this fact has long been recognized is illustrated by the influence of self-reliance, enthusiasm, ambition, the sudden desire, determination, or feeling of necessity which enables one to overcome sickness, physical circumstances, and almost insuperable obstacles, and the Cæsar-like despatch and energy which have characterized the world's greatest rulers. Who shall set bounds to this marvellous power of accomplishment, who shall limit our powers of will, our strength and health, so long as we consciously imitate the genius of fate? By the rigid law of Nature herself the man who survives in the struggle for existence is he who by his persistent energy pushes himself forward where the halting believer in fatalism would shrink back upon himself. The same rigid necessity which, on the one hand, assures us that we must provide for ourselves or starve, makes it clear that we

must be continually active in every department of human endeavor, or make no progress at all. Fate sweeps by us like a swift-flowing river, asking our will as it flows; and in every moment of our waking state we are tacitly making a choice. In the last sincere analysis, no man would be content with a universe which should render him a farthing more or less than he really deserves and consciously chooses. We are all lovers of that fate which brings us what we seek. Fate is justice. We demand it of nature, we require it of people. Without fate, law, system, uniformity, justice, call it what you will, the universe would be a mere chaos.

We must then conclude that what we have meant by determinism is that beautiful law of justice which on a higher plane leads Jesus to say that "the laborer is worthy of his hire." The laws of nature may be defined as modes of eternal intelligence: they are therefore immutable, perfect, good, and not in any sense due to blind necessity. But one of these laws is this: that every modification, every change, is registered in the fabric of events just as surely as though it were decreed by special fiat æons ago. Not all at once is the great world hurled into being, but it is slowly perfected before our eyes; and the law of becoming is such that Nature necessarily takes advantage of every slightest

detail, every obstacle, every struggle, on the part of her creatures. But, says the critic, caprice or chance can then play their part in the great drama of creation. Not so, because every so-called chance is the necessary product of an efficient cause, and the part we play as formative intelligences depends on precisely what we are. Does this seem to be determinism once more? Then let us recall the results of the foregoing chapters in the light of their relation to immutable law.

It is clear that the most fateful, the most obstinately intrusive and rigid determinism in the world could be known by us only in relation to our consciousness, and not as an absolute, independent power. Without reactions upon the world, without contrast, and without an organism capable of apprehending natural phenomena, we should know nothing whatever of the reign of law. Immediate experience, so far as it is the same for all mankind, is necessarily brought in upon us, whether we will or no. Thus far we may not look for freedom, and to find it would mean that the world is fundamentally chaotic. But indirect or secondary experience, as we have seen, varies with each individual. It is necessarily different. We would not alter this arrangement if we could, since this would mean the surrender of the moral and spiritual freedom which, in the last analysis, is all that we really desire.

This leads us to ask once more, What is man, what is that element in us which governs our conscious reaction upon the world? Obviously, there is no such thing as "luck" or chance in this reaction. If we persistently fail, the fault is in us. If we are uniformly successful, we may thank our own inner nature. Each personality attracts conditions like itself, according to natural law. It is therefore law and not chance which governs our fortune, our burdens and woes. And, if we are to escape from what seems to us a strange fatality, we must strike at the heart of the matter by beginning at home. Seek to evade the point as we may, the truth is forced upon us in the calm moments of self-consciousness that, however we may suffer or rejoice to-day, it is our own temperamental thought in the past that has sought out the way in which we are now travelling. We thus find ourselves creatures of our own fate, and in every instance the real authors of our own happiness and misery. Day by day, moment by moment, and thought by thought, the once plastic material of our passing consciousness is shaping our destiny, and preparing for us a heaven or a hell. As we look afar into the past, we see how each mistake, each crisis in life, and in fact every event, played its necessary part in shaping the course of our present experience. Life, in the main, so far as its general trend is

concerned, was fated to be just as we find it to-day; but within the limits of the immutable pathways of destiny it is clear that we possessed considerable freedom, and that of our own choosing we wandered here and there away from the narrow course of righteousness. And in this same calm moment the future opens up before us in two general directions: we find ourselves free to postpone our lesson, free to stray upon the by-paths of sin, self-seeking, and misery, or to find true freedom through obedience to the higher law.

Who would alter the beautiful necessity which, in thus teaching us that we are what we have made ourselves, at the same time points out the road to freedom through intelligent co-operation? It is not our fate to take ourselves precisely as we are and make no effort to overcome our nature, but to find ourselves in the future *as we decide to be to-day*. Fate, then, is "a name for facts not yet passed under the fire of thought, for causes which are unpenetrated." We are free in so far as we understand, and he alone feels the restraint of fate who has not yet awakened to the consciousness of its deep meaning. For true freedom is *progressive*, it is the matured result of sound intelligence and development. Perhaps, after all, that man is freest who most faithfully moves *with* fate; while the slave is he who

rebels, condemns the universe, and persistently disregards the dictates of conscience. Perhaps the freedom to which we aspire is that complete harmony of the human with the divine will which makes one particular line of conduct incumbent upon us in preference to a thousand others. Perhaps, too, in those moments of supreme decision when we choose whom and what we shall serve, when we seem to be most truly ourselves by virtue of the clear exercise of reason and spiritual insight, we are, as Swedenborg maintained, really acted upon, although we seem to be making the choice ourselves. Be that as it may, the fact of freedom presents no more difficulties than the mere existence of finite beings and of nature; for it is clearly a part of the beautiful system of manifestation whereby the character, the love, and wisdom of God are made known: without it moral and spiritual experience would obviously be impossible. Even if we state it as mere fact we must include this sense of freedom in our account of life, just as, having discovered that we have a spiritual nature, we may not conscientiously leave it out of our philosophy. Like our own character, the eternal fact for which we stand, or like perception and illumination, it needs no proof: it is elemental, and the evidence of its existence is the kind of experience peculiar to it. It is the subjective reality of which ne-

cessity is the reverse or objective side. Within all seems to be free, without all seems to be determined.

Here, again, in conflict, in contrast, and in the due recognition of two points of view we find the solution of our difficulty. Man, as we have noted in the foregoing chapter, is a member of two world-orders. In the one he is the observer of natural phenomena, — a participant in a realm of space, time, and causality, of physical law, conflict, suffering, sin, and ignorance, where the intellect, standing between the centripetal and centrifugal forces of the world, finds them a mysterious paradox. In the other, by virtue of his intuition, his spiritual sense, or soul, he is an immortal inhabitant of the boundless realm of the eternal, the world of the moral life, of living, potent ideals, of unrestricted thought and unlimited possibility, where freedom is found as an eternal gift of God, and where the unity of the two world-orders is discovered in the harmonious life of the Spirit.

Kant long ago described these two phases of experience, and declared the existence of God, freedom, and immortality to be incapable of proof. He would thus have agreed with the statements of this book, — that the only proof lies in the description of the phenomena peculiar to these immediate gifts of the eternal. The

presence in the soul of the inexpugnable consciousness of freedom and conscience is thus, like the illuminations of the spiritual sense, a fact with which the intellect alone cannot successfully deal. But Kant declared all intellectual thinking to be self-contradictory, and reality an unknowable Thing-in-itself. This book maintains that every item of our rational knowledge tells us something about reality: it is the elucidation of our intuition. Intellectual knowledge is thus sound as far as it goes,—for it could not fall outside the absolute Whole,—and it supplies the two opposed aspects of the universe, which, when both rationally and spiritually understood, reveal the everlasting harmony of the All.

The two aspects of experience, then, are not fundamentally separate, but represent the transient and permanent phases of a single life. The same facts which, on the one side, present discord, on the other, are seen to be in harmony. The precise fate, suffering, evil, the sin and rebellious will of man, which from the finite point of view are utterly bad and despisable, are, when viewed in the light of their outcome, thoroughly good and beautiful. Optimism and pessimism are thus inspired by the same facts viewed from opposite sides. The rigid fate brought upon us by our own acts is thus the precise ex-

perience through which true freedom and virtue are at last obtained. All is mysterious and regrettable until we come to judgment. Then the man who truly knows himself finds it impossible to regret a single act. On the one side, every moment of our past life seems to have been either chosen at random or determined. On the other, it is clear that we were wiser than we knew; for all these incidental details, these decisions and conscientious reactions, have somehow played their part in a drama designed by a higher intelligence than our own. Finally, then, we are convinced that in the divine economy no detail is lost. Whatever we choose shall be turned to account. Whatever we choose will teach us its lesson — when we learn to think. And whatever we choose is not, after all, selected at random; for the chooser is, in his deepest life, an immortal spirit, an organ of the infinite Self, so that the only just estimate of any detail, however trivial, is that which considers it in the light of the Whole. It is therefore illogical to affirm that the will or choice is fundamentally unknowable; for we at least know it through its manifestations, — through the fate or law which is its necessary objective condition, — and as an undeniable consciousness within.

This will be clear if we reconsider our prob-

lem from the point of view of the will. All finite existence at once appears as an *aim:* it seeks completion. When we examine the manifold opinions, beliefs, projects, emotions, and ideas which constitute our conscious experience, in order to discover their principle of unity, we find that they are all reducible to will, desire, or love. It is, in fact, difficult to state anything in regard to our mental or even of our physical life which is not will or willing of some sort. Will is that which underlies all inner emotions, all striving, craving, loving, rejoicing, grieving, whether these emotions are personal or apply to friends and supposed enemies. We are continually wishing that we were in other circumstances, that something would happen, that we might attain to certain powers, that we might do a larger amount of good, that we might be *completed*, and we are ever seeking to bring something to pass. Every moment of our actively conscious life, from morning to night, from infancy to old age, is governed by some act of will: we are paying attention to this particular object in the field of vision to the exclusion of many others, we are directing our energies along certain channels instead of innumerable others which we were free to choose; for will or love is the specific direction of mind which marshals and gives shape to all the details of our life.

Again, the striving of certain sensations to make themselves consciously perceived and admitted by us characterizes all our joys and our sorrows, all our aches and pains; and it often rests with us whether to recognize and thereby increase the intensity of our emotions or to turn the will elsewhere. The body is striving to keep itself in repair, each one of its parts is striving to maintain its due place in the physical economy; and this tendency to regain equilibrium is so well known to us that we rely upon it to restore all injuries. In fact, we have never discovered the limit of its healing power.

The phenomena of the outer world are equally describable in terms of will. Everywhere there is evidence of striving, of one great complex effort to realize certain ideals, to accomplish certain purposes despite all opposition; and the phenomena of contention between one will and another, so well known in the realm of the human mind, find their counterpart in the great outer order of nature. A study of this outer order throws much light on the conflicts of the world of mind; and, finally, we are led to the grand conclusion regarding the universe at large that through it all

"One increasing purpose runs,"

and that which holds it together, which gives it

unity, life, and meaning, is clearly the will, the aspiration, which all aspects of it reveal.

Will is therefore in many respects better known to us than anything else. It is, according to some thinkers, the centre of man, the final point of unity, so that man is in the deepest sense his own work, since he is through and through the objectivity of his own will. Schopenhauer adopted this view, and described Will as the ultimate reality, whence springs the entire world of manifestation, so that in the deepest sense All is Will.

But the universe as thus described by Schopenhauer is a wandering away from the true state of the will, which is denial, — the doctrine taught by the mysticism of the East and by ascetic Christianity. Existence, so far as it is individual, is therefore incomplete, sinful; and man brings upon himself, through his very desire or will to live and reproduce his kind, those miseries and evils by which life in this aspect is ever characterized. Here is the basis of Schopenhauer's pessimism. Only by turning away from the whole of existence, so far as it is governed by the egoistic will or affirmation, can any one learn the pathway to true salvation. The practice of justice, love, self-denial, or asceticism in some form, prepares the way for the final turning of the will to denial, — a wondrous change

effected by the ineffable Will itself, of whose absolute reality we are at least assured through the indescribable transport of mysticism.

Now, while one could hardly follow Schopenhauer as far as this, — since existence, if it is to have a glorious outcome, should be looked upon from an *optimistic* point of view, as a great whole, with a far-reaching purpose, and since will or love, like intuition, must have its counterpart or foundation in intelligence or reason, — it is evident that everything depends for us on the view we take of the will, whether we shun physical existence, society, and all affirmation as incurably wicked, or see all this in its true light in relation to the whole and give each phase of life its due place as secondary to the spiritual. The most difficult problem in the adjustment to life is, in fact, the right use and development of the will, to know just how far to cultivate the indomitable energy or persistence which lies at the foundation of success, to exercise the right amount of self-affirmation and reliance, and yet to avoid undue intrusion of one's personality; in a word, to avoid the extremes of asceticism, submission, and resignation, on the one hand, and the continual grasping for that which we neither need nor deserve on the other. The middle course is the true exercise of will-power or freedom. The extremes are profoundly selfish.

No one can be truly engaged in the task of harmonious self-development and devoted labor for the good of humanity who has not met this fundamental question of the two selves, or wills, and reached some decision. Probably the best way to settle the question is to contrast the two,—the one selfish, individual, proud, the other self-sacrificing, universal, and inspired by true humility. "No man can serve two masters," or wills. It is a necessity of our finite life to will something in particular, and whatever we really love or will we habitually seek. To think that all ambition must be crushed out, the individuality suppressed, and this world's goods discarded simply because they are not spiritual, is obviously to fall into a great error. There is a wrong and right self-sacrifice, as we shall see later. Whatever individuality and energy we possess should no more be scorned than intellect or reason, for self-suppression inevitably brings about a reaction. True individuality, the right use of every thing and every power we possess, is no more incompatible with obedience to the higher will than fate is incompatible with freedom. It is one's true wisdom both to conquer one's nature and to obey it, to win self-mastery not through resignation, not by killing out desire, but through obedience and co-operation, for every faculty is good, if wisely used. Since

each man must come to judgment for himself, it is useless to dogmatize, and say, So much self-assertion is required, and so much self-sacrifice. Here, as in the development of the spiritual sense, there are many by-paths, many false ideas in regard to will-power, fate, and freedom. The one course open to the sincere truth-seeker is to experiment, and, most important of all, never to be content with the dry negations so often put forward as genuine moral doctrine.

Our brief study of the will shows that we have the entire problem of self-consciousness once more on our hands. Precisely how much freedom of will we possess we could never know without more adequate knowledge of self, for we cannot get back of the self which chooses; and it is clear that what we mean by will, in the last analysis, is that elemental desire, motive, or spirit which, alike in human life and in the universe at large, is the very centre or heart of Being. The ultimate Will, then, is another name for Spirit,— the free, eternal Reality which all laws and all forms reveal. We should form a definite conception of the Spirit, or Love and Wisdom, as fundamental to all else, as underlying, containing, supporting, yet permeating and active in and through every soul that dwells in the republic of God, every will which sins and

then learns the higher law, every aspiration which definitely manifests the divine ideal. That which is described by natural science as man, or will, is the *phenomenal* aspect of the self: it is not the living essence which finds itself related to a higher Self. The real self is not, then, determined or evolved from without: it determines from within. Those who deal with fate from the scientific point of view are therefore incompetent to consider the entire problem. We have found it necessary to add the spiritual to the material and intellectual, and to emphasize the formative value of human intelligence. We have found that *consciousness*, and not a physical force compelling us from without, is fundamental. Our reactions upon life are governed by our understanding of it, by *ideas;* and moment by moment our thought enters into and colors all our experience, both present and future. What we *will* to do may at last depend on what we *can* do; but we find ourselves able not only to will, to act, but to issue the fiat which, if it does not modify and cause the subsequent action, is at least parallel with it. We can decide on *one* out of a thousand courses, and turn aside from all the others. We can obey or disobey the higher leading. And the conviction is ineradicable that the centre, the moral purpose or *highest* will of man, is not subject to the causal or necessary

limitations of time; but that we should possess the same character, the same ideal or intent, in whatever circumstances we might be placed.

Fundamentally, then, our problem is of immense significance in daily life, since so much depends upon the choice of ideals, the sort of conduct we will to make habitual, and upon our understanding of the divine or ethical goal for which we exist. The world of fate is the school of human experience stated in other terms. Its right use is "to bring our conduct up to the loftiness of nature. . . . A man's power is hooped in by a necessity which, by many experiments, he touches on every side, until he learns its arc." * Determinism might be universal if there were no mind, no ethical goal; yet, on the other hand, every detail of determinism would necessarily be the outburst of intelligence. In any case, we cannot avoid responsibility; for action and reaction are invariable and impartial, and, as formative intelligences playing our part in a streaming mass of details, we are constantly called upon to choose whom we shall serve, — ourselves or, by conscious adoption, the Self whose ideals are far wiser than ours. Law, purpose, will, fate of some kind, is involved in every event of life; and it depends upon our conscious attitude toward it whether it finds us a freeman or a

* Emerson, "Fate."

slave. All causation, all change, is a matter of minute modifications, brought about, not through interference from without, but through law as a direct outgrowth or immanent quickening of that which already exists. Fate therefore gives us freedom, at least relatively, as a part of the great moral purpose of the universe, by imposing upon us certain conditions. It says, "You shall be free, but let me first show you how; for, unless you were *fated* to enjoy just what you choose, there could be no freedom at all." The free man, then, is the intelligent man. He is a being of power in so far as he understands and wisely directs his forces and his will. He seemed to be freer when he chose to postpone his lesson. But by trying to dodge fate he only showed his ignorance, and ignorance is slavery. Even if the date of his death and every detail of his career were unalterably decreed, he could not know all these details in advance. He is then compelled to act as *if* even these details were of his own choosing, since every self-conscious man is morally bound to will something, and the possibilities of will have never been fully learned.

If at last you still insist that it is my past life, my inheritance, my temperament and education, which combine to determine my choice, and that therefore I am fated to choose thus and so, then I shall insist that all this has its place, — for I

need all that I am, — but that you have neglected the most important factor. I freely admit every fact on which determinism insists. I like to believe that the guidances of the spiritual sense are the foreshadowings of immovable fate, and that the right, the true, and the good will conquer in the end by inexorable law. But the incidents or means by which the end is attained are by no means final. Deeper than these, beneath all determinism, is the will or love by which it is established. *There is nothing more fundamental than this.* These details of inheritance, education, and the rest, are the material *through* which I express myself : they are not my deepest self, or will. I act through them and redirect them, since otherwise my conduct would be contrary to law. But, if any fact is clear, it is the conscious choice whereby I decide to follow this course in preference to that; for, although every fact in my experience, every trait of character, and every circumstance may be such as apparently to determine my conduct for all future time, it is not until I say, "I am ready," that the chosen career of self-sacrifice and service, or whatever the choice may be, becomes a living fact. Not until one is *fully* ready to co-operate is the will wholly thrown with the higher self or the lower self, as the case may be; and this casting of the balance on

the one side or the other, this co-operation with that which frees or that which imprisons, may often depend on the merest caprice, — even the daring to disobey conscience, that in the fire of remorse one may at last know the heart of the moral life. And these preferences, these whims, loves, and desires are only to be unified or explained at last on the supposition that something profounder than all this *means one persistent idea* through all that passes under the name of determinism.

Our final attitude, then, should be very different from the resignation inspired by belief in fatalism. The deepest, the only real fate, is the fiat of the highest will, before which all phenomena are powerless. It is not the details, the means, which are fixed; for these are changeable and flowing, and I may achieve my end by a thousand different courses. It is the idea, the will, the love which transforms and transfigures all else, — the ideal which *shall* be realized, though the facts of my life apparently determine or point to the contrary. Here, then, is the final word: my *self* is the most powerful factor in life's problem, and it neither feels bound nor determined. It wills that the moral law *shall* triumph in the end — by inexorable fate. It is aware of such possibilities of freedom through law as only dreams could inspire in the man

who is ignorant of self. Behind that self must be the supreme power of Almighty God, so far as the human and divine wills already coincide. As compared with the stern facts of the outer world, with the tendency which rises up within and affirms that we are powerless, this self, this divine in the human, this unquenchable longing, this spirit which is so confident and free that nothing can bind it, is really the maker and wielder of destiny. And a time will come when the higher life is no longer a theory, but an actual fact; and, with this higher consciousness, all friction between the two wills ceases. One no longer cares to choose and plan. One freely and fully decides once for all to practise the law, and let one's energy co-operate with the life that is all of one piece. It is then at last that one truly becomes a centre of power, a magnet to attract those whom one can serve, and a conscious spiritual agent, not through mystical absorption, but through intelligent understanding that one is an organ of that which is in its essence free.

Fate, love, will-power, — like reason, intuition, illumination, — is God-power making itself progressively known to man. On the lower plane, through affirmation and sin, it is misunderstood, misdirected, and used to personal advantage and with personal misery. On the

higher plane it is more positively revealed as that which uplifts, guides, inspires, according to our understanding of it. The universe is intelligible to man in so far as he discovers the fundamental unity of the two opposed wills, the harmony of fate and freedom: his life is virtuous and a benefit to his fellow-men to the degree that the lower is brought round into harmony and co-operation with the higher. There are two wills when and to the degree that man considers himself alone. There is one Will, one fate, one destiny, in so far as we discriminate and understand the eternal relations of finite and infinite.

VII.

ERROR AND EVIL.

"As the record from youth to age
Of my own, the single soul,
So the world's wide book: one page
Deciphered explains the whole
Of our common heritage."

Browning.

We are now to consider the most serious difficulty with which philosophy has to deal in its endeavor to grasp the fulness of life. For many people the problem of evil is, in fact, the great enigma, alike in metaphysics and in practical life. The one reality can never maintain its right to be the Perfect Whole unless it is somehow understood both to justify and to triumph over this greatest blot on the fair page of life's history. We must, therefore, again face the issue fairly and squarely, admitting all the facts which even the pessimist demands of us; and, if we cannot fully explain them, we must at least know precisely what we mean by evil, and how it contributes to the beauty of the All.

The thoughtful reader has already discovered in his own experience and in the foregoing

chapters the facts and principles essential to this explanation. In a law-governed universe everything is worth its price; and without struggle there is no harmony, without victorious triumph over its opposite no moral life. As one looks back over the years that have gone, one recalls many apparent mistakes, many sins and failures. Yet peace, so far as it is a permanent possession, has come only through struggle, after long vacillation and uncertainty, through the triumph of ideals, and by mastery of apparently insuperable obstacles. One has gained power and self-development because circumstances have called out the best that lay dormant within, not because one knew in advance how to win truth and virtue. For all who have really attained self-possession and poise, experience has been such as to test human faith to the utmost, as though Nature were determined to defeat us if she could. Yet we have survived, and our contests were not nearly as critical as we feared at the time. To the struggling soul, imprisoned in the narrow vale of morbid self-scrutiny, face to face with life's trials, beset with fears, in painful proximity to unpleasant sensations, and at a loss to know what to believe, as well as to the philanthropist brought into close contact with life's vilest criminals, everything seems dark and discouraging. If life were to have no outcome, no

compensation, and no ultimate victory, one might seriously question whether it were worth the living. But we should not expect to understand and overcome evil while we dwell upon it: it is intelligible and conquerable to the degree that we see beyond it; and, when its mystery is revealed to the individual soul, that soul has a clew to the worst evils of society at large.

Everything depends at last, then, upon one's knowledge of self; for life is intelligible in so far as one has come to judgment. To awake to a sense of the deep unity and meaning of life,— everywhere complex and varied without, everywhere governed by unalterable principles when viewed from within,— this it is to know why we suffer, and why evil has so long prevailed; and, until one has thus come to consciousness, it seems almost vain to discuss the problem of evil. If we hear a man complain that his lot is too hard, that a God of love would not let his creatures suffer, and that life is a miserable failure, we may know infallibly that he has not met himself face to face in the instructive moment of self-consciousness. A large proportion of the people one meets in all grades of society are thus postponing and delegating to others the lesson which only the individual soul can learn. Not only have people believed that some external cause is responsible for their misery, but they have per-

suaded themselves that others could cure them of their ills, that others could save them from their sins — if they held the right belief. An all-powerful materialism and a false theology have thus combined to keep man in bondage, and to hide from him the great secret of self-regeneration. Those who think for themselves are, after all, the only people who are in any sense free. To all others, evil and suffering wear a false appearance, which must be cast aside before one may hope to interpret life for them. This chapter is, therefore, especially addressed to those who have begun to see the rich compensation of the darker side of life; for it is from those who have the living consciousness of higher ideals that we must look for the uplifting of society, not to those who chant the horrors of sin and disease.

We have been guided from the outset of our inquiry by the principle that things and beings, qualities and relations, exist for us so far as we are *conscious* of them. The world within and without our consciousness may be, and probably is, perfectly beautiful, even to the minutest detail. But since beauty, like our perception of the world at large, consists of external arrangement, and inward emotion dependent on our organism, it does not exist for us until we see it in right relations, until the æsthetic sense has

been quickened through the contemplation of beautiful ideas. More beauty environs us than we can discover in a lifetime; and in the history of the individual, as in the development of the race, the perception of beauty increases with the expansion of the intellect, so that the characterless landscape of youth may become a vision of charming lights and shades to the matured artist. Place Homer in the hands of an artisan who knows nothing about Greek, and he will see a meaningless series of signs where you see strength, simplicity, and rhythm. Or place the truth-loving soul on the mountain top of illumination, and all will be clear and beautiful where the pessimist in the vale below beholds only sorrow and shade.

In the same way one may fall into numberless errors, or be the slave of passion or of some dominating personality, and yet be utterly unaware of one's error or servitude until some changed circumstance brings it to notice. The narrow, rut-bound religious believer knows not that he is narrow until a happy chance brings him to self-consciousness. Perhaps the chief benefit of foreign travel is the opportunity of viewing ourselves and our neighbors from a distance. All our knowledge of life, in fact, is primarily due to change, either in our own point of view or through some outward circumstance

which brings unsuspected facts to notice. We progress when we are disturbed, when our easy-going conservatism and self-satisfaction are upset by new ideas. Until we meet our superiors, we are apt to take credit to ourselves for wisdom and spirituality. But a day comes when all that we have said and done seems mean and insignificant in comparison with the glorious possibilities ideally presented to view. The virtues of to-day may be the vices of to-morrow; and the time may come when such deeds as the slaying of animals for food and for scientific experimentation, the deception of one man by another, and the tricks of politics and trade, now scarcely eliciting a remonstrance, will be deemed the evils of a profoundly unethical age, to call it by no worse name. And, in general, we may say that custom, error, evil, and a given type of so-called virtue continue until we are thrown out of harmony with them through the consciousness of a higher standard.

The presence of a higher power or the consciousness of a higher standard, then, is that which leads one to look upon certain aspects of life as evil; and, if we reflect that none of our standards are absolute, but change from age to age, it will be evident that whether conduct be deemed good or bad depends upon the point of view. Whether we approve or disapprove,

whether we feel the agreement or condemnation of conscience, depends upon our own state of moral or spiritual development; and in all cases, consciously or unconsciously, we judge a thing, a deed, a person, to be good or bad in *relation* to something, to some line of conduct or person set in contrast to it. Good and bad, then, are not absolute terms, but terms of relation. Nothing is inherently good or bad. A thing is good so far as it fulfils an end, bad in so far as it fails to realize an end; that is, it is good or bad, when judged by a standard. Thus a machine is good, if it embodies the ideal of its designer, or in so far as it serves a purpose; and any part of it is bad which interferes with the working of the whole. "An environment is good for me," says Paulsen,* "that offers tasks suited to my powers. That world is good for a people and for mankind which calls out and develops predispositions and powers. Without conflicts, natural and moral, there would be no problems and no work."

It is clear, then, that whether the world, or any part of it, be deemed good or bad, depends on our general belief concerning it; and, if we may accept the verdict of those most competent to judge, the world is emphatically a system, an order, and therefore moral, therefore good. In-

* Introduction to Philosophy, p. 325.

deed, it is evident that there could be no absolute evil; for, if one atom in the universe were thoroughly and inherently vile, the universe would not be a harmony, and therefore it could not exist. And in general things possess the qualities which we attribute to them, not in themselves, but through their *relations*.

Nothing, then, is wholly what it appears to be by itself. Nothing is "sufficient unto itself" nor good by itself,—neither matter, mind, thought, feeling, nature, nor man. It is a slander upon our fair universe to speak of any one as totally depraved. It shows ignorance of our high origin to regard anything, any man, as independently good. Fitness to play one's part in the completion of some whole is ever the mark of goodness. A thing is bad or evil by excess or defect; and the same thing may be both good and evil, according to the point of view.

For instance, no one would question the goodness and necessity of animal nature—in its proper place. If the perfection of the animal kingdom, like that of the vegetable kingdom before it, has come about through struggle, as the evolutionists tell us, then that struggle is surely justified in the light of its outcome. Indeed, it is difficult to see how the same result could have come about in any other way. But the same tendencies which are good among animals be-

come evil in relation to society, when judged by a higher standard and carried to excess in man. We condemn as selfish in man the instinct which in animals enables the strongest to survive. So far as a man simply expresses his nature, be it animal or spiritual, he is to this extent good. The so-called depraved man may act according to natural law, and use his wit just as skilfully as the good man; and the vilest criminal uses faculties which we should call thoroughly good if they were employed in a good direction. There can be no doubt, then, as to the origin of the impulses and tendencies which we call evil, when they become human, nor of their relative goodness, when wisely directed. All share this lower nature in greater or lesser degree, and all deal with it in ways which may be deemed good or bad according to the point of view.

One is sometimes more than half persuaded that all people are about equally sinful. A few great crimes are noised about and held up to the conscience of the people as types of wickedness, for which everlasting punishment is not too severe. But our sensational press diligently spreads the details of such crimes abroad, that all may share in them. In the hidden places of society far worse crimes are known only by the all-seeing God. The half-developed animal man

who commits one crime, and is then condemned to a life among those upon whom a thoughtless society has set its stamp as incurably "depraved"— instead of treating them as human beings to be elevated — may not be nearly as wicked as the cruel capitalist who oppresses his employees as though they were slaves, or those who throughout their lives make it easy for the sinner whom society accepts as of good repute. We all dwell together in human society, and necessarily partake of its ills and its blessings. He who condemns is not himself above guilt. He who seems good and virtuous is often deemed such because our standards are so low and partial.

Our problem is, in fact, greatly simplified by distinguishing the various planes of being through which man passes. "All evolution, all progress, is from lower to higher plane. From a philosophic point of view, things are not good and evil, but only higher and lower. . . . All evil consists in the dominance of the lower over the higher, all good in the rational use of the lower by the higher. . . . True virtue consists not in the extirpation of the lower, but in its subjection to the higher. The stronger the lower is, the better, if *only* it be held in subjection. For the higher is nourished and strengthened by its connection with the more robust

lower, and the lower is purified, refined, and glorified by its connection with the diviner higher; and by this mutual action the whole plane of being is elevated. It is only by action and reaction of all parts of our complex nature that true virtue is attained." *

Here, again, we see that careful discrimination is a necessity of all moral progress; and the need of the two sides or aspects of our nature is clearly apparent. Evil is such only from a point of view, yet on the one hand the necessity of that which is classed as evil is just as clear as that it should be called relative evil, and not be indiscriminately classed with the good; for, although in the absolute sense everything is good, — the Absolute is more than goodness, for its perfect life is both means and ends in one, — it would be a most erroneous and harmful conclusion to pass from the infinite point of view to that of the finite, and affirm that "all is good, there is no evil; all is mind, there is no matter." Were this mystical doctrine to be applied universally, — and this is the real test of any creed, — all moral distinctions would at once be effaced, all ethical standards thrown aside, and the utmost license would be given to the sinner. The wicked man could then revel in his inglorious

* Le Conte, "Evolution and its Relation to Religious Thought," pp. 374, 375, second edition.

life of crime and shame, all efforts to purify society would at once cease, and we should have absolute chaos. Or, more strictly, there would be no universe, no sinner, no goodness, and no God, but an absolutely simple, inert mass, without parts and without life. The result would be the same if we affirmed that there is no personal man and no outer world; for with the denial of distinctions the whole beautiful fabric of the world of human experience, human responsibility and progress, is theoretically swept away. The distinctions must be kept up, even as applied to the Absolute; for, where all is God without distinction, everything is equally good or bad, as caprice may determine.

The same result follows if we adopt that other mystical doctrine which affirms all natural existence to be evil; for, if our life here is simply a wandering away from perfection, a degraded form of being, grounded in ignorance and illusion, then experience is utterly hopeless, without significance, and without a moral goal. Again, if we are so vile that a propitiatory sacrifice alone could redeem us, all moral standards are valueless; for no room is left for personal regeneration. Both these views are absolutely without hope, and are based on the supposition that life is purposeless; for both imply that something must save us, — if we are to be saved at all, —

and Schopenhauer's conclusion then follows very easily, that pessimism is the only real basis of religion. But, if the Christ is deemed the perfect example, the bearer of a higher standard, the way to the higher life, where we may follow if we will, then the whole scheme of life is transformed. There is hope because we know the way, and because no one can redeem us but ourselves. We must then rid ourselves of the so-called Christian doctrine that man fell, that supernatural power alone can save us from our sin, and that the sacrifice of one being is sufficient salvation for all, or else regard life as a purely purposeless, hopeless, and wicked fall from grace; for the moment purpose or design is admitted the whole pernicious and pessimistic doctrine is surrendered.

That the entire mystical doctrine of sin and salvation is thoroughly in discord with purposeful life, as we know it in nature, is evident from the rapid acceptance in these times of the scientific theory of evolution. Thus we are learning to avoid the two extremes which have so long held sway as genuine theories of evil, the advocates of the one deeming it an objective reality, and the disciples of the other trying to dismiss it as a delusion. There is a growing tendency to look upon the evil-minded man as the unbalanced man, the one who misdirects his

forces, he who is not yet truly a man. Evil, then, is not in any sense an entity: it is slavery; and he who is enslaved needs to be enlightened, to be made aware of higher standards, and taught to see the real economy of obedience to them. We thus avoid the difficulty of attributing evil directly to God, since evil, as we know it and are enslaved by it, is primarily human. With God it is more probably viewed as means to an end, and therefore understood in the light of its outcome.

It may be easy for one who is convinced that God is the only reality to argue that there is no evil; for, since God is conceived as pure love, pure light and goodness, it is difficult to see how darkness could spring from such a pure source. It is, then, an easy conclusion to affirm that the darkness must be an illusion, the mere absence of something. Yet it is clear that every describable experience has a positive basis; and, whatever we call a state where darkness predominates, it is never without a definite cause. A negation as applied to the manifestations of reality, in fact, explains nothing. When the sun sets, we experience a change, and govern ourselves accordingly; for we have learned to know darkness through comparison with light. The fiendish scheming of the criminal is undeniably positive; and, if there is any experience in

the world that is emphatically the presence of something, it is physical suffering, and the crying evils of our boasted civilization. Such tendencies are surely not the mere privation of good, nor are they merely "good in the making." They are the centrifugal forces of our progress, without which progress could not be. The lower is just as good, just as necessary as the higher — in its place. Both would seem good and beautiful, could we view them as they really are in the light of the whole. The lower nature, like fate or law, is a blessing or a curse, according to our use of it. Nothing could be more beautiful than the law which compels us to suffer until we come to judgment, and then frees us from suffering because we have learned the necessity and place of the two sides of our nature. Evil and suffering are only necessary, then, up to a certain point, as I have shown more fully elsewhere.* After that they do not exist, — for us, — since everything, when understood, is seen to be a means to an end, and therefore good. To understand life so that all friction shall cease, and every tendency be turned to good account, is, in a word, the ideal of all our progress.

Evil loses half its terrors for us when we thus view it in the light of the whole, and consign it to the lowest round in the ladder of being. We

* "The Power of Silence," chapter on "The Meaning of Suffering."

have had a false idea of life as a whole, and thought that evil should not exist at all, as though we could learn to know light without contrasting it with darkness. We have had a wrong idea of heaven, as a place where there should be nothing to overcome, nothing to sacrifice, and therefore nothing to win. Then, too, we have tried to exterminate evil instead of realizing that it is not in itself bad, but is really "the lower state of living as looked at from the higher." We have dealt with society as though it were much further advanced in its evolution than it really is. The evils of intemperance in all its forms, and all the corruptions of government and society in our large cities, are the mud and mire of a civilization not yet emerged from the earth. We have not yet entered the ethical stage of being, — not as a race, — and a large proportion of mankind have not yet reached the age of reason. Impulse still runs rampant; and, while this is so, corruption of some sort is the natural result. We must take into consideration the long road still to be travelled. Man shows by his conduct what he is; and, if you wish more of him, you must not expect to reform him by talking about effects, and treating him as though the earth were not large enough for him and for you, but by leading him to a higher plane. Aid him to come to judgment in his soul, and his

former life will quickly become odious in comparison with the higher, now for the first time outlined before him.

The criminal, about to commit a murder, would not sin if he could be fully enlightened in regard to the social and personal effects of his intended crime. The slave to passion can become the man of power if that element be added which makes his passion good. Everything is good and true in so far as it is susceptible of completion, bad and erroneous in so far as it is removed from the Whole. Judged by this criterion, everything in some measure qualifies the experience of the Absolute; and the only serious question is this, Is the conflict ultimate or absolute? If the vilest sinner in the universe has some point of contact with the Whole, if, in a word, every one may be "saved," then there is no fundamental opposition, and our Whole is preserved intact. Once more, it is casting aspersions upon the wisdom and love of God, if he be not competent to "redeem" the wickedest of his creatures. And, if he can redeem them all, it is no argument against the beauty of the universe that such sinners exist. For just how he can redeem any particular sinner only he in his perfect wisdom could know. It is enough for us if we understand the principle, and see how in our own lives every error is a partial truth, and every sin so far good as it serves a purpose.

It is argued by some that God could not know our mistakes nor suffer with us. But how, then, could he perfect us, how could he be the Absolute, unless he knew both the temptation and the victory through heroic achievement by which it is finally overcome? Is he not himself immanent in our moral contests, himself the higher power by which we master the lower? Such help we should expect from perfect love and wisdom as should really further our progress without defeating the object of experience, just as we leave the child to work out a mathematical problem instead of solving it for him, when the child will obviously be the gainer. The Absolute Self might thus be present in our suffering in so far as our life experience is viewed as a progressively completed whole. Such a life as this — the life of the Absolute, where our tasks play their part in his larger experience — would be the completion of goodness as we know it, just as it is the completion of personality, of truth, beauty, of life on all its planes, and of any particular end in the universe. No particular end, like goodness, could alone characterize such an experience; for it is the All. Everything has its complement: only the Perfect Whole is absolute. We have seen that not one thought, not one fancy, however wild, however erroneous, is without some reference to reality. All knowl-

edge, all thinking, all consciousness, begins with experience; and, if the reader will put this truth to the severest test, he will find that the most absurd as well as the most rational thought is necessarily a construction from experience. To think is, in fact, to make some judgment about reality. All thought, then, is in some sense true: all truth is in some sense incomplete. Try to describe a landscape, a person, yourself, or even a grain of sand completely, and you will find it impossible to say, "My description is completely true." Nowhere do we get complete wholes; for everything is bound up with something else, and the minutest atom is practically infinite in its relations. Thought never exhausts, yet is never wholly separate from feeling. Intuition ever points onward to new possibilities of experience. Every statement we make needs immediately to be qualified; and our profoundest generalizations, as Huxley pointed out, are, at best, only in the highest degree probable. Probability is, in one sense, "the guide of life"; and everything is true conditionally, even our highest moral standards.

All sinfulness, all evil and error, then, in the truest sense, is "a missing of the mark." It is false only so far as it lacks completion, not through innate wickedness. Not every fact, not every symbol in life, is of equal value; but an

object is true, real, or good in proportion as it approaches or qualifies the Whole, or that Self which alone can know things as they exist absolutely. Here is our criterion: only the Whole is real, perfect, complete, absolutely good. The object of all existence, of all thinking, is to grasp or describe the real or complete. Could we succeed perfectly, the result would be absolute truth and goodness. So far as we fail, experience or thought is partly true and partly erroneous. Judged by this standard, and with due discrimination, error and evil assume their real relationship in the long series from the depths of finite ignorance to the heights of perfect wisdom. All finite beings, all thoughts and desires,— when considered by themselves,— are necessarily imperfect, mere fragments or appearances standing in need of completion. Nowhere do we find rigid lines of distinction, at no point do vice and error suddenly become virtue and truth. But all that exists is so related to the One that, taken as a whole, the many necessarily constitute its perfect consciousness.

Does it not, then, add a new significance and beauty to life to realize that every detail bears a divine relationship to the whole? A lower and a higher state of being would seem essential in any world-order. We may conclude, with Leibniz, that ours is the best possible world-

order, if we believe it to contain the least amount of evil consistent with perfection. When we cease to view evil as an objective reality, we have made the first step toward this larger comprehension of the universe. When we come to judgment sufficiently to see that our disposition and ignorance are largely at fault, we have made the next step. If the experience of self-consciousness shows that we have hitherto lived wholly for self, the compensation is already apparent in so far as reflection has now taught us to understand and obey the higher law; and, surely, our disobedience of the moral law was not mere sinfulness, if it has taught us the imperative nature of that law. And the next step is to adjust one's self to the higher and lower forces, so that they shall work together for good.

This wise attitude is dependent upon three things: —

(1) Not to regard any tendency in one's self or in another as essentially evil, but as so much misdirected energy, deemed bad only because it is compared with a higher standard and because its use is not yet fully understood.

(2) Never work with mere effects, do not dwell upon the process nor look at obstacles and conditions, — by themselves, — but face toward the light, look at the outcome, take the college settlement into the slums, take the higher to the

lower, remembering that the mere presence of the higher is sufficient to create new standards.

(3) Remember that most of our suffering, and the larger part of our endeavor to overcome it, are unnecessary. All existence is an aim, all desire indicates the presence of the Higher with us; and our part is to let the Spirit have its way through us, to let it work like leaven till all the life is transfigured from within, from lower to higher, from higher to still higher, until the Christ-spirit shall prevail.

VIII.

THE ETHICAL LIFE.

"The truest revelation, the truest voice of the nature of things, is not in what we see, but in our thoughts of what ought to be."—*W. M. Salter.*

Probably the most important discovery in the development of human thought is the intuition that fundamentally life is one great unity. No one can fully convey this intelligence to another, although it has been suggested by a thousand seers. It is not so much the product of reason as of an incalculably rapid survey of the universe after years of search and reflection. Spiritually, the great unit is made known as a living presence, an enveloping love, a divine Father revealing himself through all men. Intellectually, it is perceived as the necessary totality of being, beyond which thought can never go, that which is ultimate, real, eternal, and revealed according to universal, immutable laws. Morally or ethically, it is made known as the one purpose, the one will or goal which binds the great world-system together,—a whole in which each man is a moral agent whose high privilege it is to realize a divine ideal. Individually, our

lives are a mystery until this insight comes. Henceforth, although one has hardly set out on the pathway of the higher life, one shall dwell as near the heart of events as though the goal were actually won, and one were looking back over the victories and defeats of one's moral experience. For it is this consciousness, and this alone, that one is of permanent moral worth in the universe, which explains the mysteries of our toilsome life as we live it day by day. We have considered this divine ideal, will, or purpose for the individual soul so far as it is related to the problems of self-consciousness, of intuition, fate, error, and evil. We are now to penetrate still farther into the realm of the ideal, and study the finite self in its relation to society at large.

We have found strong reason to believe that man is not in any sense sufficient unto himself, nor good alone. Physically, intellectually, and spiritually, he is most assuredly part of an organism, and is not independent of society even in the most isolated experience of self-consciousness. In daily life, in thought, language, in every moment of existence, he is a debtor to society and to his general environment, without which he would not have the faintest awareness of his own being. Truer yet, he is precisely what he is, in a given case, as a sharer of divine power, wisdom, and will. He is a dependent

being and a pensioner in a world where every factor is related to him in a way such that all the æons of eternity would not enable him to return its service to him. It is well at times for every one, however humble and however wise, to realize in quiet and grateful recognition this divine economy, whereby every creature that lives is made a sharer in its bounty, and where man especially is not only the heir of eternal power, but server and served in a marvellously beautiful world-order.

The consciousness that one is really essential to this great world-plan, and that one can be of present, active service to society, thus counterbalances the painful discovery of wickedness and sin in a world where higher and lower are engaged in age-long contest. One thus becomes a higher in contrast to some lower in the long process of moral development,—a lower which one must elevate by making the higher seem attractive. For to those who have clearly grasped this intimately close relationship of divine shareholding and service of the whole by each and of the whole for each there is just one righteous course open for all future conduct; namely, to follow an ethical life, a life of strict honesty, justice, sincerity, enthusiasm for the right, the true, and the good, and of devotion to a high ideal.

There are, it is true, three stages in our moral progress; namely, (1) to see the law theoretically, (2) to see evidence through partial obedience to it that it is perfect, and (3) to act as if one really believed it true. But, when a man at last sees the imperative nature of the moral law, understands a rational or ethical precept, and is thereby convinced of its soundness, its beauty, and its universality; when conscience assures him of the right, — if he does not then obey it, he is guilty of renouncing the most sacred obligation of the universe, and of deliberately turning aside from the pathway of righteousness and truth to follow his own lowest self, thereby virtually denying the genuineness of truth, disbelieving his own reason, and surrendering his right to be called a sincere, upright, moral man. No one worthy of the name of man — that is, one whose privilege it is to overcome and to obey — can, in fact, see the full significance of the ethical ideal who does not straightway begin to make his life conform to it. The very essence of ethics is this consciousness of what "ought to be," — the awareness of a moral goal, of a higher life than the present condition of society. Heretofore one may have intended to do right, but failed, or unconsciously obeyed a general impulse toward the good. But now one becomes an intelligent moral agent through

actual knowledge of the unity of life, the singleness of the moral goal, and the duty which each one is called upon to play in a world where to live is to share and to serve.

One highly important law, however, should be borne in mind in the pursuit of any ideal, whether it be intellectual, moral, or spiritual. To bring the higher into the presence of the lower often means that the lower is disturbed and aroused into bitterest opposition. The lower plays the part of the conservative. It is satisfied with itself and its knowledge, and autocratically demands freedom to sin or enjoy itself in peace. This has ever been the result when a new doctrine has appeared in the past, and the struggle of new ideas to gain a foothold in society is repeated in the history of the individual. If a man really sees the beauty of righteousness and desires to practise the moral law, this is of itself sufficient to cause regeneration; and he will begin almost unconsciously to realize his ideal. Meanwhile he may sometimes unnecessarily condemn himself as a hypocrite when he is, in truth, progressing as rapidly as his own obstinate lower nature will permit. It is essential, then, that, with the discovery of the imperative nature of duty, one also learn the law of its realization through contest, discouragement, and persistence, reserving the terms "hypocrite" and "sinner"

for those who have glimpses of the ethical life, but turn back to the selfish life of slavery and suffering. With these two laws in mind, then, the absolute nature of the right and the method of its progressive becoming, let us briefly glance over the ethical field in its relation to the Perfect Whole.

From the point of view of the foregoing, we may now define the ethical life as the conscious pursuit of an ideal end or moral purpose. It is a life governed by reason through the application of eternal principles. It is not something to be taken on occasionally, but the life of every day and hour worthy of man, — the religion of duty. It is a life where one is conscious, above all else, of a desire to do the right, to follow the highest leading, where one shows what one believes by one's conduct, where, in all sincerity, life and belief are one, in unselfish dedication to truth, goodness, and service. It is not mere discontent with the present state of society, which is perhaps far better than it would be, were it reformed in accordance with the ideas of those who complain of it because, for example, there is not an equal distribution of money, or because governments exist which prevent them from being lawless; for the trouble in these cases is often solely in the wrong attitude of the critic and in

the indolent adjustment to society's needs. It is rather the knowledge that what now is, temporally speaking, is not finally right, but demands completion. It is, in fact, the persistent choice of two sharply contrasted motives which divide the world into two great classes,—those who live for themselves and those who have the welfare of others first of all at heart. And this brings us at once to the question of self-sacrifice.

That much of that which passes under the name of charity, benevolence, and self-sacrifice, is really the garment of selfishness in its subtlest form is a truth now so generally recognized that it hardly needs mentioning; nor is it necessary to dwell upon the fact that those who are apparently selfish are frequently the most devoted followers of the righteous law. Those tendencies which we deem wrong and selfish may often be the impulses which, misunderstood and therefore misdirected, are urging us on to our special task; while the traits of character on which we pride ourselves are apt to be the real obstacles to genuine ethical growth. Society has advanced largely through a natural tendency to self-correction when development has proceeded too far in one direction, as, for example, the Protestant Reformation and the French Revolution. A higher law than any of human devising governs events; and in society at large, as well as in our

particular community and in individual experience, selfishness, sins, and evils are being turned to account by means which nothing short of knowledge of the whole social organism would enable us to understand. We are prone to blame and to commend from a purely relative and present point of view, whereas all ethical judgment takes account of the far-off goal. As a matter of fact, we seldom know enough about people to praise or blame them. Their motives and duties in life are only partially known even to them. A whole social group may be apparently selfish, plutocratic, and indifferent as related to their immediate neighbors, yet be playing an unconscious and necessary part in the evolution of the race as a whole. It is perhaps unfortunate to be called upon to play the conservative, the fiend or villain; and this book offers no excuse for such conduct. But it is already obvious that it is no easy matter to judge all conduct fairly, and say how much of it is purposeless, how much means to an end higher than itself. Apparently, we cannot be too tolerant of the methods of the universe nor too charitable toward those whose mission is a mystery to us, since we know too little as yet to view our social evolution as a whole or to apprehend its complete organization in a particular case.

Here, as elsewhere, progress is due to the con-

flict and struggle for adjustment of opposites; and no one may justly say that the lower is not as good as the higher — in its place. But, ethically, everything depends upon whether it *is* in its proper place. Self-preservation and self-realization are fully as imperative as self-sacrifice, and the ethical problem is not to be settled without due consideration of all sides of our being. Knowledge of self, then, is the one essential; for, in order to make the right self-sacrifice, one must know what will, or self, is to be denied and what one affirmed. And self-consciousness reveals two supplementary facts, — (1) each man stands for a given purpose, a fixed moral ideal independent of time and space, not progressive, but perfect from the start; (2) yet it is the peculiar nature of that ideal that its realization is a matter of time, therefore of experience, requiring careful adjustment of means to ends through self-restriction and self-assertion.

The first step, then, is to discover as nearly as possible the ethical ideal for which one stands in the divine economy, the special talent or ability which one should develop to the full, and then proceed with this development in such a way that it shall be under self-control; that is, one should act from reason, not from impulse, even when it is a question of self-denial or of immediate good, and make self-realization not a

personal, but a social end, so that every detail of life may be transfigured with the sense of its moral worth. If self-consciousness shows me that I am weak, one-sided, the cause of my own misery and unhappiness, it is for me to overcome all this by getting out of self, by gaining my balance through service to humanity. Happiness, self-development, and poise, essential alike to self-completion and service, are thus made secondary and incidental to the higher end of truly ethical conduct.

Whatever one's motive in life may be, whether it be profoundly selfish or commendably altruistic, it is clear, then, that all conduct involves self-sacrifice, the difference being that the selfish man sacrifices the higher good, while the altruist merges personal good in the higher life of self-denial. The wrong idea of self-abnegation not only leads to the selfish life of asceticism and the infliction of bodily harm, the partial loss of individuality — which should not be sacrificed under any circumstances — and the surrender of laudable ambition, but it really prevents one from accomplishing the greatest good, since the right use of all that we have and of all that we can become through harmonious self-development is thoroughly compatible with the highest usefulness. It is well, then, to consider in risking one's life to save another, or in any case where

the present good involves great self-sacrifice, if one is really making the true sacrifice.

Every moment of existence involves sacrifice of some sort, for man is so constituted that he can put forward but one aspect of himself at a time. The common good, common welfare and protection, demand service and the apportionment of tasks in any society which shall endure. This sacrifice originates far back in the animal world, in the care and protection of the young. No one could be absolutely selfish and still continue to exist, for the reason that no one is absolutely independent. Yet every one must in a sense be individual, in order to exist at all. Neither individualism nor socialism could ever prevail alone in a relatively permanent phase of society. The ideal state of society is rather one in which each man stands for what he is worth, where each receives a fair proportion of what he earns, where no one holds a monopoly of power or wealth, nor any authority which takes away the freedom or the natural rights of man, since the earth belongs to men, not to man, and since no one may create a monopoly nor oppress the sexes, morally or industrially, without committing a sin in the name of the highest and divinest law.

Neither individualism nor sacrifice is of itself good or bad; and evil does not enter in to com-

plicate the problem until personal desire and aggrandizement predominate, and are used in the development of a monopoly, — in other words, a want of balance. One should therefore remember that everything depends upon the motive, the love, the heart of the matter, the wise direction of one's forces, since true self-denial is not a superficial act, it is not mere acquiescence where it is no effort to seem good, to distribute wealth, or where pride enters in, but genuine and whole-souled willingness to give up personal interests that a fellow-man may be elevated. One should take the trouble to think whether the charity is really rational before contributing to its support. One should consider the possibility of doing too much for those who ought to be self-helpful.

Again, it is well to consider whether in one's zeal to realize some future goal one may not have become hardened to the present needs of man. Whenever one asks these great questions, — whether to do the present good and sacrifice the possible future good, giving up self-development it may be, or to look far ahead and adjust means to the ultimate end, — one is bringing together the two elements which in one form or another constitute every fact of life. The scholar, devoted to some great scientific pursuit, may be deemed exceedingly selfish by those who

demand all sorts of present deeds of philanthropy from him; while, in truth, the genuine scholar denies himself half the pleasures of life, in order to serve the truth. It is unquestionably wrong for one who really possesses ability of a high order to dedicate his life to the passing deeds of the moment, when he might the better serve humanity by devoting himself to his special talent. No one can afford to lead an unethical life; and, surely, it is the duty of every one to give society the full benefit of genius. On the other hand, the far-off goal is often a mere excuse for doing nothing, and the ethical self is subordinated to the self of temporary comfort and egoism. Every one should find time for daily acts of kindness and self-denial.

Energy, individuality, self-reliance, will-power, prudent self-preservation, and self-development thus go hand in hand with obedience to the higher guidance, trust, humility, self-denial, and devotion to society. Sound ethical development and utility are ever the result of careful adjustment between the two. Goodness is therefore both a science and an art. A man must have pure motives and act according to principle, but he must give both self and society their true place. Self-sacrifice at its best means the wise use of all that we are. In so far as it involves self-neglect, self-surrender, and self-

suppression, it is sure to result in ill. The truly ethical man may, it is true, lay down his life for humanity, but he lays it down that he may find it enriched and more wisely directed on a higher plane.

I must, then, have a higher motive for doing good than either self-realization or self-sacrifice, as commonly understood. I must feel a higher impulse than that of mere argument, for even the selfish man can justify his conduct by argument. I must feel that *spirit* which uses all these as instruments, where at last self-scrutiny itself gives place to a *positive* expression of the divine ideal, where the right guidance comes, the means of rendering service and the right opportunities for doing good, *if the heart is right.* This, in a word, is the essence of the moral doctrine which this book has to offer: the spirit or motive is positive and fundamental; all else follows as a natural consequence.

The same comprehensive principle, developed through due consideration of conflicting tendencies, would hold, were we formulating a complete ethical system; and we should find something of value in all standards which have been offered as guides to the higher life, just as all religions are good in their place. That doctrine or church is best for me which aids me ethically to express my highest self. It would be the

height of unreason to affirm that any one religion is infallibly the best, while all the rest are false. To the seer every man he meets is in the possession of an ideal as yet only partially expressed, giving promise of a better man than his daily life seems to indicate. It is the high office of religion to quicken this dormant nature through adaptation to his type of mind. While, then, right is always right, there are many methods of approach to the one goal, just as there are many creeds, all seeking to embody the essence of a religion which, if it could be free of all sects, would become universal. Wherever there is a keen sense of that which *ought to be*, a divine discontent inspired by the consciousness of ideals, the ethical principle makes itself known. Knowledge of the sorrow, suffering, misery, and degradation of the world as it exists to-day, may be for some the starting-point in the ethical life; and they may feel it their duty to begin that life among the lowest classes of society. Again, the mere consciousness of one's great debt to society for its advantages of education, science, literature, art, companionship, and government, may be a leading stimulus, or the discovery of the profoundly unethical principles of trade, of politics, the rapid development of monopolies, and the existence of double moral standards. For we confess it with shame of our fellow-men that the

principles on which business and politics are generally carried on are not yet sufficiently scrupulous to invite the co-operation of our best men, and we are eager to bring about a reform. But, whatever the approach, it is clear that there is no exclusive road to the great goal of life; for the logical application of our doctrine forbids us to accept any standard without qualification.

Just as a man may develop character and become a master in his chosen occupation by spending his life in the woods or at sea, as well as at college or at the head of an army, so two men may be in perfect accord spiritually, yet differ greatly in their application of a moral precept. All methods and all standards that have appealed to men are good,— in their place,— and all cease to be of use when a higher law is discovered. It would be the quintessence of dogmatism for one in whom the moral sense is remarkably keen or one for whom the inner light is the daily guide to affirm that this method should be adopted by all; for the sense of the right and of the spiritual varies in degree with different people. Some live ethically because they *must*, and the spontaneous expression of righteousness is surely the ideal which we hope to see realized in the generations of the future. But many are compelled to work out all principles inductively, and carefully test their motives in the light of society's needs.

Whereas, if all men could be spiritually illumined, probably no ethical standards would be required, since there is little need of the examination of one's motives where one central intuition of the right and true is distinctly prominent. But, although the ought comes out from within instead of being evolved from without, conscience is no more the entire reason for ethical conduct than is the spiritual sense or the love of truth. Experience, tempered by reason, enlightens even the conscientious man, and guides him away from extremes; for one may easily become morbidly conscientious. Always, then, *the whole man should speak* through a genuine moral action. One should make the best use of both intuition and reason, since both are needed to maintain the ethical balance. One should seek the principle involved, and then apply it rationally, asking one's self if one is making the right self-sacrifice, and what the result will be upon society; for man is an imitative creature, and one must consider whether one's conduct is worthy of reproduction.

The whole matter is summed up in Kant's famous categorical imperative: "Act only on the maxim whereby thou canst at the same time will that it should become a universal law." In other words, act as you would willingly see all men act toward each other and toward you under simi-

lar circumstances. Such conduct is categorically imperative, because, according to Kant, it is good and necessary of itself without reference to another end; while action, which is good only as a means to something else, is hypothetical. It is doing good for its own priceless sake, it is being a law unto one's self, — sincere, righteous conduct such that no element of one's being contradicts it; and as such it is the individual expression of the sublime will or purpose of the universe. According to this principle, I ought to do so and so, even though I should not wish for anything else; that is, I ought not to lie, although it should not bring me the least discredit. Or, to put it in Adam Smith's phraseology, it is conduct which an "ideally impartial observer would approve."

Yet we have seen that no statement can stand wholly by itself. Kant maintains that the good will alone is absolutely good, — a will which in all its maxims gives universal laws and never contradicts itself. But we have concluded that goodness is ethical adaptation to the social organism. A merely good will is therefore insufficient, although the desire to do good is itself an act of righteousness. A good will is such through its manifestation, and one cannot desire it to become universal without considering its effects upon society. One must not only desire to do

good, but act, live, labor, overcome, so that one's ideal may become a vital factor in society; for one can become an ethical law to one's self only in relation to the social organism. Will, love, desire, is good when tested and counterbalanced by wisdom. Even the will or love of an infinite Being, as we have noted in Chapter III., could be complete only through perfect intelligence and a universe wherein part is adjusted to part in fulfilment of one central purpose. Nothing is good alone but the Perfect Whole; and by this we have meant all along that relationship of God and his universe which no word, no term, no philosophy, can adequately describe, since the eternal Reality is all ends in one,—goodness, beauty, perfection, wisdom, love, fatherhood, self-manifestation, and all that could complete the infinite All. And the finite will should copy the infinite so far as it can.

The pursuit of the right, then, for its own sake, *includes* the desire to furnish a universal ideal to society, and the personal benefit or happiness which may come to the moral agent, thereby adding to his utility. The will, the motive or spirit, is still fundamental, but is perfected only *through* its instruments. One should dare to do the right, to express one's profoundest moral and spiritual convictions, though they gainsay all the conventions of society, throwing

one's whole soul into the life of righteousness. Likewise it is, undoubtedly, the highest motive to pursue truth for its own sake, regardless of where it may lead one. At the same time it is far better to see in such conduct a means to an end whereby both society and one's self are to be benefited than to think that society *may* be aided and one *may* receive a reward; but one would rather not mention these things. Sometimes one *must* consider the effects upon society and upon self. Again, one is called upon to trust, not to think of money nor of any other reward, though one knows not how one is to subsist. The essential in every case is to await the dictates of the inner sense, and then act rationally, faithfully, and trustfully, with the conviction that the right and the true will conquer in the end despite the firm hold of vice, injustice, and oppression, and with the knowledge that some high end will be accomplished through us, even though we are ignorant of it at the time; for the central point is ever *to think and act in harmony with the higher self.*

Such is the ideal; and it stands out sublime as some grand mountain peak in severe and lonely strength as compared with the vast reaches of human failure to attain it, with the selfishness and thoughtlessness of a society that has scarcely reached the confines of the ethical

realm. It is clear that the realization of this high ideal is a *life*, — a progressive experience of self-regeneration to which one's whole activity should be dedicated. "There is no duty if I cannot perform it," says W. M. Salter.* "We have not to make the *world* over, but only ourselves." And the first step is, undoubtedly, to make precept one with practice, so that conduct, which teaches above words, shall be a frank avowal of belief. We need this frankness in the pulpit, we need it in society, among writers, and in the business world. Every one should ask repeatedly, "Is that harmonious with the rest of my life" at its best? and let no transaction pass in which the better self is the slave or subject of wrong and deceit. All conduct should therefore be such that one could confess it fully without shame, — conduct in which the moral agent owns no allegiance to selfish interests, wherein one never bows to power nor worships partisan creeds, but where fully, freely, and courageously one could lay bare all that one is, all that one does and thinks, before Almighty God.

The highest reason for living righteously, then, is one's kinship with eternal goodness and love. Higher than any goal of our own choosing is the divine ideal dormant within each human soul. Self-scrutiny and consciously chosen goals

* Ethical Religion. Boston: Roberts Brothers.

may help us along the pathway of progress; but the greatest achievement in the end, the greatest good, the greatest freedom, is realized in the supreme choice, whereby one decides once for all to follow the divine life. This goal is alone complete and final, — complete through the steps that have led up to it, — it is that alone which we realize because we must, because thought itself can go no higher.

Like the mystical transport, then, the moral goal proves to be a pure white ray whose constituents — beauty, happiness, the greatest good of all, sincerity, justice, truth, self-denial and the rest — are not in themselves final, but are aspects of the ethical life. The highest good is not any one of these alone: it is rounded development of the whole through the completion, the beautifying, of all that is in us, "the exercise of all virtues and capacities, especially the highest." A man's chief motive may be love, but his love must be guided by wisdom. And this harmonious union of love and wisdom in one whole of beauty — the highest trinity we have considered in these pages — sums up all that is implied alike in the life of self-denial and of self-development at its best. The ethical life is thus ever a harmony of opposites gathered around one will; and, if one has the intuition of wholeness through unity on any

plane of thought, the whole problem of life is thus far solved, since this ideal is the goal of the universe at large, and is therefore in imitation of the perfect life of the Absolute. Not every one can begin with this clear moral sense. There will be times when one is thoroughly in doubt how to act. But it is within the power of every human being to *be* and not to seem, to act and not merely to think that one might do good if it were not so much exertion, to stand up courageously for the right, the true, and the good, and thus to make every living soul a centre of moral conviction and strength.

It is never an excuse, then, to urge one's ignorance of what to do or where to begin. Every one knows a better way. We all know better than we do. This book appeals to every one to *begin*, to persist in the realization of the ethical ideal; for the regeneration of society is to come about through education from within, not through correction from without. Begin, live, aspire, realize the best ideal of the moment; and this earnest effort shall lead the way to greater achievement. For every higher leads to the highest, and even the ethical life receives its crowning glory through the transcendent beauty of the spiritual. There is just as much need of a better form of religion, as a practical living essence beating in the heart of society, as there

is of a higher ideal of justice and of business. The religious "ought" is the highest duty of all, since it includes and supplements all that is most vital in the righteous life. And by this we mean that spirit which makes the ethical life something more than the mere performance of duty. It amounts to worship and fervor for the right and true, — that state where the soul is really and deeply touched both with pity for humanity and by a desire to make man's condition better. It is the living essence which, by the majority of men, is simply accepted theoretically.

For, if we consider for a moment what it means to be truly spiritual, it becomes evident that there is much talk about it by those who lack spirituality. The discussion of dogma, the emphasis put upon differences in creed and ceremony, the exclusion of all but the favored few who chance to belong to one's church, the insistence upon mere belief and outward appearance, the worship of tradition and of vague, if not superstitious, doctrines, — all this passes for spirituality, yet betrays its low origin by its servitude to formal detail. There is much playing around the point without direct inculcation and illustration of the thing itself, regardless of its temporal husk. Yet there could be but one genuine basis of religion as deep, as unmistakable, as pure as

the moral law; namely, the possession of the living spirit so grasped and so appreciated that it is made manifest through every hour of daily life. This essence is not only something substantial, vital, enduring, but it is revealed according to law as surely as any fact of nature. It is the living assurance that there *is* a higher law, and that the law is perfect.

The one dominant note of Jesus' gospel, for example, is the immutability of the law, from whose penalty there is no escape. "Judge not, that ye be not judged," he says. "With what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again." And all this he says, repeatedly, depends on what we *are*, on our purity, our love, our sentiment of forgiveness, our trust, our singleness of purpose, our faithfulness and desire; for "seek, and ye shall find. . . . According to your faith be it unto you." Here, in simple, unmistakable words, very little understood and very little practised, noteworthy for its entire absence of doubt and inspired by the authority of perfect conviction, we are given a doctrine of life's spiritual essence inculcated by a soul whose own life was a sincere, therefore an ethical, embodiment of it. One is immediately lifted to the realm of the universal by a consideration of it. The em phasis is everywhere laid, not upon the process, but upon the end, the ideal, the spirit or heart

of the matter, the ever-present source of inspiration within, where the Father dwells, and where, if we make the spirit, the life, the motive, or *being* the one essential, what we shall do, what we shall say, and how we shall be cared for will surely, and in due time, be made plain. Clearly, no one can really appreciate this doctrine, and still continue to serve dogma and ritual. No one can practise it, and still be fearful and anxious. The law is either perfect or it is not; and, if it is, absolute trust and conduct shaped by it will alone show that we really believe it. Such trust, such life as this, is worthy of universal imitation; and he who feels it to be a living reality is the truly spiritual, the truly superior man.

Is the ideal too high? That could not be in so far as it is divine. It seems high in comparison with our low attainment. But, surely, there is need of such earnest effort as this for the benefit of all mankind, — to sweep away the cold formulas and ceremonies both of morals and of religion so far as they claim to be what they are not, — that we may at last behold the stern beauty of the moral law and the beneficent essence of the spirit. The ethical life is as simple as the spiritual which completes it. It is life worthy of being universal, it is sincerity, justice, truth, goodness, and beauty realized according to

eternal law. It is a life wherein we do the best we can in the light of our highest insight. It only asks of us to give our souls, and not trade in appearances; but it asks this much of every man that lives.

IX.

THE ETERNAL NOW.

"Be still, and know that I am God."

Let us now turn aside for a time from the cares and problems of human experience, so far as life holds us in bondage to circumstance, and spend a quiet hour together in that infinite realm where time, space, the finite self, and all its circumstances, are transfigured in one completed whole. Every fact, every problem or phase of life which we have considered, has pointed forward to this unity of the whole, where its imperfections should be transcended through mastery over the conditions of our finite life. Wherever we have sought, we have found the same elements, the same simple yet perfect and universal principles. Experience has throughout proved to be twofold, but one side is the interpretation of the other. Everywhere we have found life to be co-operative. Nature, the inner life as well as the outer, all that we know of human society is given us through the union of our inner selves with a reality lying beyond, at every point suggesting the intimate relationship of everything that lives to everything else, and

at every point suggesting the duties which we owe our fellow-creatures and the universe as sharers in this divine bounty. Our study of intuition and fate, of evil and the moral life, has simply presented this problem of co-operative self-consciousness in other forms. And from every point of view our study has pointed steadily forward to one conclusion; namely, to the absolute Life, the Spirit comprehensive and wise enough to be the eternal source of all that co-operates and shares.

The simple but wise and useful life which this book advocates, then, is the life in harmony with the Spirit which this deep sense of kinship inspires. Just as one feels the spirit of a book, of nature, or of a person, and reads at a glance the substance embodied there, so one may penetrate to the heart of all problems, of all conduct, and of life as a whole, by thus seeking its essence, from which all details follow as a natural consequence. The original sentiment, the motive or heart of a matter, thus includes all that flows from it. Everything depends at last upon the mental attitude or will. One has no need to manipulate effects who thus penetrates to the foundation of things. In times of trouble, in the consideration of all difficult questions, and in the endeavor to help a fellow-man, there is just this one direct method; namely, to seek the

Spirit, to dwell with it, cleave to it, abide by it, awaiting its guidance, following its dictates, and co-operating with its silent emphasis of the right, until the outer life shall respond to this central purpose within. It is not the true Spirit unless it be equal to every possible occasion. It may require much time and thought to see how this doctrine of the spiritual wholeness of things may be practically applied. Yet here is the ideal to be kept steadily in view until it becomes a living factor in one's daily experience. For, obviously, there is no half-way position for those who thus comprehend life's unity. Every moment of existence must be a worship, every activity must be dedicated to the right, since one simple test is to be applied in all matters of conduct and in all great problems of philosophy; namely, Is this harmonious with the insight of my highest self? And no one can hope to understand the beauty of the universe until this harmony, this unity of conduct, shall become its clew. That which my *soul* attracts is what I need, that of which I am most deeply convinced will reveal to me the secret of the universe if I rationalize it; and, when I harmonize my conduct with this deepest attraction, I may rest assured that I am leading a wisely spiritual life. Life may seem far more complex than this. This simple rule may seem incapable of universal ap-

plication. But here, at any rate, is the ideal, the key to life's mystery; namely, its purest spirit or love, that which holds all else in intelligible solution. And, if the mind cannot fully grasp and rationalize all that is found here, it is just because the Spirit is larger, truer, deeper than mere thought about it, and therefore includes the intellect and all its unfinished speculations.

For always when we look far within, when we attempt to describe the highest that we see and feel, there is an element which eludes us; and this somewhat that will never be described by any words of ours, but which is the basis of all descriptions and of all life, is explicitly the Reality or Spirit, by virtue of which all these differences of life and thought exist. All paradoxes and all descriptions mean the same truth at last. They are apparently contradictory, simply because all statements of the nature of things must be immediately qualified. The Spirit is One, yet it is the Many. The one aspect is the other, yet it is not; for the Whole is more. This is the utmost we can say. "I report as a man may of God's work," says Browning, "all's love, yet all's law." And now, as we attempt to describe this great unity from the eternal point of view, we do not surrender one paradox, one result or distinction, which has aided us in this brief inquiry. For our Whole,

although a spiritual unit, is explicitly the universe of discriminative intelligence, cognized by us under the garb of time, where not a moment is lost in that great All, which could only have an absolute experience through perfect economy and definite self-organization. We may do eternity and the Spirit an injustice in thus attempting its characterization in the language of time. But, if the reader now understands how largely this language is merely tentative and suggestive, — since the Spirit will not be adequately described, — our account will suggest that larger Whole of which it is a mere fragment.

By this time the reader who really feels this quickening Spirit as a vital factor in consciousness will be ready to agree that there is no higher ideal than this; namely, the constant realization of the Spirit whence all differences arise, the recognition of the presence and reality of the eternal while still pursuing the pathway of temporal life. Every moment of daily experience may thus suggest the Indescribable as truly as the most exact treatise on the divine nature; for it is the high privilege of every human being to betray this spiritual Permanent, vivifying the pettiest details of our transient existence. Any thought, any occupation worthy of man, may be transfigured by this higher consciousness. Every experience will become beautiful when thus put

into its eternal setting in the background of the Whole. The present thought of the reader is a pathway to this eternal realm; for eternity is the setting of the moment as truly as of the century, and it is ever here where time is in deepest truth no more, ever there where space is a mere detail in the boundless picture of the Ineffable. A new life, a new world, opens like a vista before the mind when one thus turns aside from the hurry and care of daily life with the calm realization that in this present moment one is a living soul dwelling in the boundless realm of the eternal now.

Let us pause to realize what this means in all its fulness and *make* eternity and the Spirit mean something definite to us. The perplexing problems, the paradoxes, the cares and mutations of life, the present troubles of the reader, the details which characterize the great world of nature spread immeasurably around,—these are of time, transient, fleeting, phenomenal. But deeper than all this, and possessing it all in its true light and completion, is the Spirit, unseen, unchangeable, and eternal; resident, living, sustaining, seeking to realize its ideals through us here and now. Let us forever drop this subservience to time which has so long led us to locate heaven and peace so far from us, and realize that so much of goodness, of peace and

love as we are capable of receiving is here, immanent in the never-ending moment. For the law is perfect; namely, that we receive according to our readiness to accept. This is our fate, to know and to receive only what we are, yet to increase in the higher strength and wisdom to the degree that we consciously and freely choose it to the exclusion of all else, since wisdom is never forced upon us, but ever awaits our free and unqualified acceptance. Here, more truly than in any other sphere of human thought, everything depends upon the will or desire. One might live a thousand years in the presence of all this peace and wisdom, yet be wholly unconscious of it as long as allegiance to person, creed, dogma, and the cares and pleasures of our surface life, hold unquestioned sway; and, although the road to the higher life and equanimity again and again opens up before the mind, never until the last connection is broken with the lower interests, when one really cares more for the Spirit than for all its passing forms, does one at last fully enter this changeless realm of the eternal.

In order to gain this poise, then, one must really desire it, and consciously seek the inner stillness. There, in that quiet inner centre, is the living, present Reality, in whose love and wisdom one may repose in peaceful trust, —

there is to be found the beneficent essence so long obscured by the false theology and thoughtless belief of the past. It exists, it abounds, it abides. There is no need to consult books or persons, no need to approach it through the media of petitions and ceremonies. One simply needs to discover that the very life by which we exist is a part of this abiding presence, persisting through all the mutations of time, and then to rise to a plane superior to the sensations, the self-interests, fears, beliefs, and pleasures which have so long held us in bondage to matter.

For self-scrutiny shows that there is a part of us which endures, despite all change in the outer man. The fact that we cannot seize the soul in the act of self-expression is by no means a proof that it is not there; for we know it only through its manifestations, and through the discovery that it persistently means the same ideal. Moreover, during illness it is not this inmost part of us that is sick, nor is it affected by evil and wrong-doing. It is rather an imprisoned spectator of all this, longing to master the conditions of sense, but not quite free. It does not grow old with its body. It feels itself not only superior to space and time, but even now capable of living under conditions other than those of matter. Indeed, it is probable that those in whom the spiritual sense is highly developed are

open to a higher or finer world, where one may see distinct objects clairvoyantly, detect thoughts and emotions at a distance, help others and receive help spiritually; a realm which is wholly free from the limitations of physical sense, where answers come simply because one desires light, not through reason, but because one touches the object immediately; where one becomes aware of many possibilities which may never be realized in the body, although it is frequently the case that the prophecies of this timeless sense are mistaken for ideals which one expects to see manifested in the realm of time.

The experience of rising to this superior plane is thus distinct and indisputable, for one feels the presence of a somewhat not elsewhere met with in human life. It gives one a sense of power, of freedom, and of unusual insight. At first the experience is as impersonal as the æsthetic intuition, when the soul is caught up in visions of natural beauty; or when, in listening to a Beethoven symphony, one seems to pass over vast reaches of sky and clouds, afloat on great waves of melody. Mingled with it is a sense of peace, of ease and calmness hardly to be compared with any experience in the world of time. Such stillness nature nowhere offers us, yet it is a stillness which bears with it a force apparently equal to that of nature's greatest

activity. It fills the soul to overflowing. It inspires an ecstasy of spiritual fervor and rejoicing. It struggles for individual revelation. No obstacle could withstand its mighty inflow. Yet one can only receive a little of it at a time. No gift is worth the sacrifice of equanimity and calm self-possession. One is inclined to express such visions in pæans of ecstasy, like the psalms of old. But no, it bids one be poised and moderate. Not in bursts of enthusiastic praise shall the deepest emotions be expressed, nor in one-sided development, as though the spiritual insight were all-sufficient. It is good only through its results. If one becomes open to it little by little, expanding with its life, growing pure in the presence of its love, it will gradually and harmoniously transform the whole being, overcome and transmute all that is not brought into subjection, and lift the finite life to the exalted plane of wise obedience to the perfect will of the infinite.

In thus becoming grounded in the fulness of eternity and life, one seems to penetrate to the very centre of purest existence, — there in that undisturbed vigor of Being where the mighty forces of the universe are held in check, and brought into harmony. Thought has nothing to offer which takes one so near the basis of life's strength and beauty as this. One lives more in

a moment than in days of merely intellectual and physical labor. One awaits these moments, not merely as the oases of life, — for existence is never wearisome to those who know them, — but as moments when so much is added to one's self that all else seems like mere filling, the mere development of that which here resides in inexhaustible essence. At other times one can half persuade one's self to doubt and to look at life's darker side as though it had no compensation. But, when these insights come, the whole wide universe of beings and things is seen to be of one piece in the great life of God, whose infinite beauty, love, and goodness receive their full manifestation in that unsearchable whole whose name is eternity.

It almost seems a matter of indifference who it is that thus finds itself an inhabitant of eternity, and whether one says that this higher self is God or is just myself, the finite ego. For, on the one side, the illumination is all that one soul can grasp of the essence of life in one living fatherhood, which is what we mean by the term God in its more personal sense; and on the finite side it is the unity of all that we denote by the words "self," "will," "intuition," "ideal," as the embodiment of the divine purpose or manifestation of God, and in the last analysis all we know of God is just this personal realization.

Yet, although the Spirit is here revealed as at one with its organ or individualized expression, a wiser second thought shows that Reality is more than this, — the divine basis of all illumined souls, of all struggling and of all ignorant souls, of all worlds, and of the total universe. As high as one ascends, the Spirit is therefore still the beyond, the life of all that moves in every part of the Perfect Whole. Instead of wandering off into the levelling visions of mysticism, one's attitude thus fortunately becomes one of humility and worship, since he who claims to know all and to be all is thereby cut off from true wisdom. One has ascended to this higher plane to learn, to be purified and freed from the constraints of sense. One should therefore open one's self to receive, to be guided and strengthened, that one may once more take up the round of temporal life, and carry the spirit there. Rest and silence are preparatory to labor and thought. One should therefore cultivate the silence rather as the highest in a long series of experiences than as anything final in itself. In this way only can one avoid developing too rapidly in the spiritual life.

For there is one lesson that is emphasized above all others by this experience; namely, the need of moderation. Whether one is aware of these higher insights or not, and however vision-

ary and vague it may seem to speak of eternity as a living present that never ends, here is a practical method which every one can at once apply in actual experience.

Suppose, for example, instead of rebelling at circumstances, blaming, criticising, and worrying, one should act on the principle that everything that experience brings is for one's good; that is, it will result in good if one approaches it in the right spirit. How else can one be superior to circumstance? If nature is wholly beneficent in the long run, what other attitude is rational? Life gains wonderfully in attractiveness as soon as one ceases to plan for the universe. It is enough for me to be responsible for myself. By putting an end to this constant reaching out for something that we do not deserve, by reducing all desires to a few commendable ideals, and by becoming quietly contented, the real worth of life has an opportunity for the first time to make itself perceived. The Master of events has been capable of planning for us all along, but we have somehow deemed it best to take the affair into our own hands. The power of affinity or desire will attract such friends, such opportunities and possessions, as we need, if we give it freedom to act. The law that nature seeks the simplest course, or the line of least resistance, applies with equal force to the mental

realm. And this restful attitude of mind — ever ready to do the task at hand, but never seeking more than our own inmost spirit attracts — is so effective that no other reaction upon life is to be compared with it.

It is acceptance of life, not as the changing circumstances of the moment present it, — for all that now is is to give way to a better condition, — but adjustment to life as a whole, as it shall be, as it is eternally. It is not the contentment of satisfaction, of settled conviction and conservatism, of selfishness and comfort. It is contentment through knowledge of growth, through the conviction that one is of service to the world, and the readiness to exchange a poor doctrine for a better. "He in whom the love of truth predominates," says Emerson, "will keep himself aloof from all moorings and afloat." In other words, he will live in eternity, and not in time. It is well, then, for every one occasionally to lay aside all results, all plans and beliefs, and ask in the quietness of inward rest, How is this? Is it still true for me, or am I hindered in my progress through association with outgrown convictions? Do I possess true freedom, or am I hampered by all sorts of fears, opinions, allegiances, and the sacrifice of my truest individuality, — the self that by virtue of its mere existence in the world was meant to stand firmly and freely

for an ideal? Have I enemies, do I cherish thoughts of revenge, unforgiveness, and anger, or am I at peace with the world, not trying to reform it, but willing to do my part by thinking, doing, *being*, the wisest that I know?

By thus squaring accounts with one's self, by individual thinking and self-reliance, one learns to remain at home in one's own soul. One learns to work and perceive with the soul, to give of one's self, to think, live, speak, and write with *power*. One does not "descend to meet," nor is one narrowed by occupation or environment. One remains true to the inner self by maintaining this high level, and drawing all things up to that. Development, therefore, proceeds from within, each year in closer affinity with the Spirit. One loses interest in people and things which once held full sway. But for each loss on the lower plane one finds associates and attractions on the higher plane. One seems to be losing much in taking up the life of self-denial and devotion to an ideal. Men hesitate to practise ethical precepts for fear that their business will suffer. Yet the few who are true to principle win our respect and patronage, and it is the universal confession of those who live for others that here only, in the life of service, is true happiness to be found. And no one who has faithfully sought and found the inward still-

ness and self-mastery would for a moment return to the life of slavery to sense.

In all endeavor to elevate conduct, to overcome, to rise superior to trouble, to develop or to help humanity, one should therefore start from within. Take the clew from the soul's highest advice, its purest desire, and let this ideal be persistently uppermost, — the ideal which *shall* be realized because one wills it above all else. Every deviation from this high ideal, every effort to manipulate effects, and to deal with outer things as though they were ends in themselves, lowers conduct into subservience to detail. To hold the ideal, knowing that the end will follow, is to show that one really understands the law for which this essay pleads; namely, that the Spirit includes, masters, and harmonizes all the opposing forces, the incongruities and evils of our superficial life. And this method of conduct, applied in our daily life, will save one all the fear, the care, and worry of our hurried modern methods; for, since the way opens when the motive is right, one need not trouble, — and the heart will be right if the desire is there.

Again and again, in one's extremity, when life's burden seems too hard, and one knows not where to look for help, nor how to rise above trouble, there is one wisest and most effective

method; namely, to realize that the Power which brought us here will see us through. Trust! trust! is the word. One may not see how circumstances are to be adjusted. The way may seem utterly dark, with apparently no means either of financial or moral and spiritual support. But there is a way, there is help; and our part is to be faithful, to lay aside everything until the guidance shall come, — at once superior to doubt, and to the depressing pessimism of friends. Such trust alone proves that we really believe in the integrity of the universe. Such an experience safely passed through is the greatest confirmation of the one most practical truth, that there is a Wisdom which will, which *must*, guide us to the end, since it has never failed us yet.

In order to keep this realization clearly before the mind, it is well also repeatedly to formulate a general intellectual view of life's wholeness, in the foreground of which the events of the moment occur, and as a part of which one may be of constant service to a steadily advancing society. Remember that everything, every fact of life, every philosophy, is incomplete by itself, and needs to be supplemented. Therefore, one should, above all else, avoid extremes, seeking poise and breadth of thought and all-round development. Evil, error, and trouble, worry, and

the cares of daily life are best overcome, not by dwelling upon them, but by persistent attention to that which shall counteract and transform them. Every factor in life may be made good in its place. It is for us to enlarge to the consciousness of the whole, the eternal beauty and the never-ending right. It is for us, if we would grow strong in the Spirit, to live a simple life, that nothing may interfere with the steady advance of the higher nature from within. Where the heart is right, all good works shall follow as the fruition of natural law. Where the heart is right, one may save one's self a thousand trying experiences, thereby making one's life far more helpful to others. And, where the heart is right, a love that is superior to ourselves will choose us as its instruments in the expression of its own divinity.

Oh, how one longs to express the glory and beauty of life from this higher point of view, how one longs for some stronger language, or for some means of communicating to the untold thousands to whom life is still a mystery and a burden that fundamentally, and for them, when they shall be quickened to see it, life is really a joy, an apocalypse crystal clear, through which appears the fair spirit of transcendent Being! Here, within, one shall be forever refreshed at will. Little by little the outer world will ap-

pear more beautiful, and one's burden less heavy. All truth, all power, all wisdom and love, are here in this one limitless present eternity. Every moment repeats the beauty of the whole. Every fact of our sense life is related to it. The Spirit that possesses itself in this eternity knows us, loves us, needs us, — you and me. There is no other power, no other reality, no other perfect friend. Nothing can possibly prevent us from knowing and being all that this Self would have us know and be, except our own unregenerateness; and all this shall give way, and the right, our own loftiest will, shall triumph. No greater precept is emphasized by such soul communion than this: to keep the ideal ever before us, even when engaged in the most trivial task; namely, of patient, orderly realization of this perfect design of God. No greater mistake could be made than to confuse time and eternity, and declare all this to be accomplished now. He who really loves truth, law, and order, will throw himself in line with this highest moving, content if each day witnesses its triumph, its growth, and its act of service.

Behind, beyond, beneath all that passes is an eternal totality or whole of being, which always was and always will be what it now is, which always was and always will be everywhere. Even the terms "Spirit" and "love," which we

have used so freely, are inadequate to express this fulness, this height and depth, the eternity of the infinite. In the last analysis we must also add perfect Mind or Intelligence, that comprehensive Thought wherein the Spirit itself is made definite,— the bearer to all life of that which gives diversity, individuality, system, and law. The one Eternal Being is thus the only possible reality, because it is both Mind, Father, and the Spirit, perfecting and dwelling with our human life,— with all that we love and all that we are,— and at the same time the unchanging Permanent, transcending all that we mean by personality and the mutations of time. Its comprehensive character, its wisdom and will, make it the living All or Absolute, whence springs the wonderful diversity of the world. No philosophy is sound which omits either aspect of this complete Life,— either its eternal grandeur or its immanent relationship with its universe of manifestation. No observer of the divine world-order is true to this great wholeness who does not thus distinguish between his own inadequate interpretation, infected with the limitations of personality, and the larger, actual Presence which he feels and which all interpretations strive to grasp. For all thinking betrays this Presence, all ideals are expressive of its purpose, and all the universe is contained within

its intuition. All that exists lives with it. All that exists is beautiful, needed, and good, as parts of the Perfect Whole. We catch but glimpses of its glory as it passes from its own purity of perfection down through all the orders and struggles of life, and hence upward to self-recognition in man; but always it is there, ever here, and unchanging in essence. It is the highest joy of the finite to witness its revelations in the great world of nature and in the realm of spiritual consciousness within.

O eternal Father, life and substance of all the universe, power, light, wisdom, love, and goodness, from which we exist, in which we abide, drawing from thee all that we are, and offering to thee our scant words of praise, we raise our thoughts to thee in frank confession of our finitude, yet with unceasing love, ever-strengthening aspiration and longing for closer companionship with thee. Accept the poor attempts to embody in our halting speech the beauty of our life with thee. We feel thy spirit ever present, we gather evidences of thee wherever we turn in the great world around. Yet the glory vanishes when we would speak of thy transcendent presence. We can only trust that

thou feelest our longing, our unspeakable joy in existence, and that, poor as our witness is, thou wilt accept it, manifesting thyself in the hearts and minds, in the lives and souls, of those to whom we would extend the hand of helpfulness and the word of hope.

THE POWER OF SILENCE

An Interpretation of Life in its Relation to Health and Happiness

BY

HORATIO W. DRESSER

Contents: The Immanent God; The World of Manifestation; Our Life in Mind; The Meaning of Suffering; Adjustment to Life; Poise; Self-help.

The main ideas of this book are that God is Life and the only Life, and that, if man would quiet himself, be silent, and yield to the influence of the Divine Life within him, all disorders and pains of mind and body would vanish like mists before the sunshine. This lesson is worked out with a faithfulness and earnestness that give the reader a high regard for the author and for his teaching. It is really an attempt to bring men to a consciousness of God, and to fuller life from him in the practical affairs of every day, the small as well as the great. . . . The fundamental thought of God as Reality itself and the only Reality, consequently as inmostly present in everything and with absolute control, is fully illustrated in the chapter on "The Immanent God." The statement here is admirable, and fully establishes its main position. But when, with equal clearness, it recognizes the fact of man's independence, and need to quiet himself before God in order that the divine influence may be freely received, and may be to him life and health, we feel that this independence is unaccounted for. A New Churchman cannot avoid the desire to suggest here Swedenborg's doctrine of creation as resting upon a reactive basis of earth, from which rises man, capable of knowing and reacting to the life of God, but standing upon his own feet, and reacting as of himself in perfect freedom. Our book recognizes to the full the fact of this independence and the consequent duty, but does not attempt to account for it. . . .

"The Meaning of Suffering" is the title of an important chapter, which suggests that the real meaning is to indicate when we are out of harmony with the divine life, and to lead us voluntarily to seek the order of that life. Physical suffering is regarded as largely the effect of disorderly mental states. . . .

. . . It will be gathered from this that the main object of the book is to inculcate a quiet trust in the heavenly Father as the only Healer, to dispel fears and exaggerations, to bring the habits of the life into accord with the laws of God, and to teach the constant subduing of selfish impulse, in order that one may be wholly subject to that Spirit which is itself health and peace. It entirely discountenances the use of drugs, believing that the helpful confidence that the taking of them gives is better attained otherwise. It teaches that one has only to keep his thoughts directed aright,— toward the Father, and good and useful work from

him,—and the whole being, mental and physical, will come into order, and be pervaded with life. Various means of attaining this end, some of them exceedingly good, are suggested; but we have not space to refer to them. . . .

. . . It will be asked, "What is the attitude of the book toward Him whom we know as God-with-us, and without whom no one can come to the Father?" On this point it must be said that, while there is not a negative word or suggestion, the book is silent; apparently, as a good man once said, "Believing in him at heart, but not yet seeing clearly how to speak of him." A true knowledge of the Lord would add much to the excellent lesson which the book already contains.—*The New Church Review.*

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